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NEW STATESMAN

Christmas double

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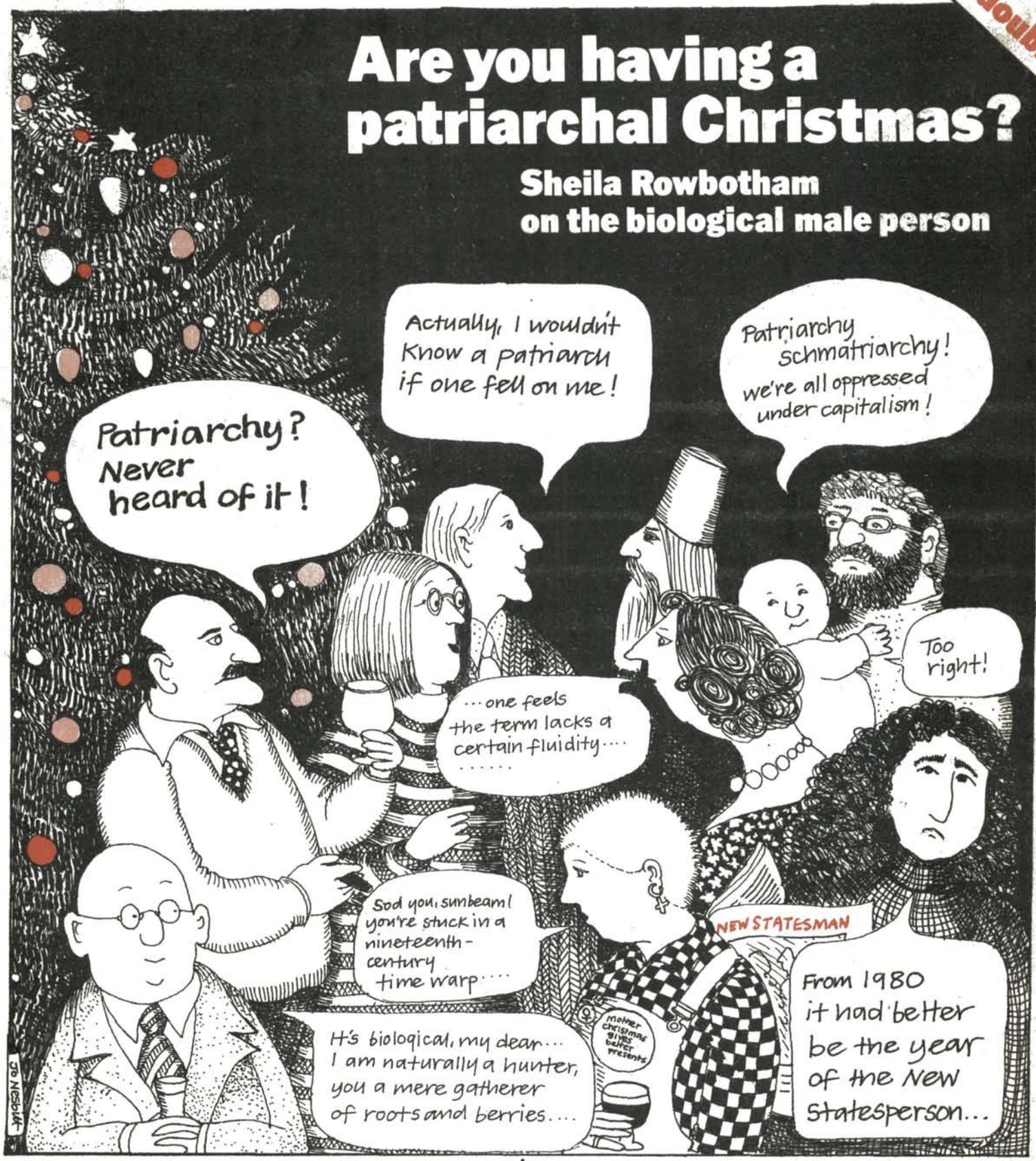
Are you having a patriarchal Christmas?

Sheila Rowbotham on the biological male person


Patriarchy? Never heard of it!
Actually, I wouldn't know a patriarch if one fell on me!
Patriarchy schmatriarchy! we're all oppressed under capitalism!
...one feels the term lacks a certain fluidity.... .....
Too right!
Sod you, sunbeam! you're stuck in a nineteenth-century time warp....
It's biological, my dear... I am naturally a hunter, you a mere gatherer of roots and berries....
mother christmas gives better presents
NEW STATESMAN
From 1980 it had better be the year of the New Statesperson...
JO NESBIT

Grooming Britain's bourgeois monarch

E.P.Thompson: breaking with Doomsday

The secrets of the Post Office boardroom

Surviving your Christmas turkey

Two stories: from Ireland and Zimbabwe

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NEW STATESMAN
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Ted Heath and the Algerians

AS THE WORLD RECESSION deepens, will the richer countries retreat into a tariff-protected laager, and tell the Third World to go to hell? Or are they capable of an initiative which might revive trade for both sides – assisting the industrialisation of the Third World, and its penetration into Western markets, on the understanding that such a process might produce new outlets for our own half-used industries?

Willy Brandt's international commission, which includes such various bedfellows as Ted Heath, 'Sonny' Ramphal of the Commonwealth Secretariat, and Olof Palme of Sweden, gave on Monday a preview of the results of two years of investigations into these questions. Brandt, Heath & Co are now convinced of the need for massive financial transfers, for reform in commodity trading, for changes in the World Bank and the IMF, for protections against protectionism – which would have been heresy just a few years ago. It was not, said Brandt, mere do-goodery, but a programme based upon the necessity for survival. More detailed exposition of the common interests of North and South would be produced in the commission's full report in February.

The Third World has good cause for being sceptical about such commissions of wise men. Ten years ago, the Pearson Commission produced its own suggestions, including the proposition that developed countries should devote 0.7 per cent of their GNP to aid. Scarcely any of them outside Scandinavia manage to do so.

And the political climate in much of the developed West scarcely discourages scepticism. Unemployment, insecurity and inflation – together with an energy crisis which dramatises our dependence on the Third World – has produced in many minds a paradoxical lurch towards the Right. Margaret Thatcher leads the way into the laager, cutting development aid wherever she can: she is dutifully followed by Lord Carrington, pantomiming distaste for Third World statements about a New International Economic Order.

BUT THE FACT is that the isolationist Right has not yet won this argument. There are simply too many bankers, economists and IMF officials who see that the old trading system – based on the supremacy of the dollar, and the ruthless bargaining power of the richer countries – is crumbling around them. The Algerians launched their campaign for a New Order after the OPEC victory of 1973. Its language may still be too fiery for the bankers' tastes, but some of its logic they now find hard to dispute.

This has something to do with the fact that Brandt's consensus includes, along with Heath, Layachi Yaker, the Algerian ambassador to Moscow. They have been able to agree on the idea of 'an emergency programme' which would not only transfer funds to the South, but would also modify the monetary system, and aim for an agreement between oil producers and consumers – one which would exchange strict conservation for secure supplies and more predictable price increases. The Brandt commission has confronted the fact that nothing can be done without an agreement on oil. (Of course, there are some Western countries which can offer credible programmes of conservation. But can anything be done about the fearsome hydrocarbon thirst of the United States?)

ACCORDING to report, what Brandt's team has achieved owes much to the patience and flexibility of Edward Heath – news which comes a little oddly to those who remember Premier Heath's brusque dealings with non-European Commonwealth leaders. If it is true that he wishes to make the acceptance of Brandt's recommendations into a personal crusade, he will probably find that the people now in charge of his own party are somewhat more intractable than the Algerians.

But the Left will not do well to be found sneering easily at Heath's efforts, or those of Brandt and Ramphal. In a recession, it is always the Left's constituency – the poor – who are worst afflicted. They are entitled to demand that any initiative which might help them should be supported while it has any prospect of success, and there is no sense in which democratic socialism can benefit from the reinforcement of the psychology of the laager.

NOTES

The Japanese disease: corruption

Donald Kirk writes from Tokyo: It is now clear that what were once regarded as isolated cases of corruption illustrate a much broader pattern in which every major Japanese government agency, manufacturer and trading company participates. When Lockheed Aircraft was implicated early in 1976 in a campaign of bribery and influence-peddling, some of Japan's most powerful figures were involved, notably Kakuei Tanaka, who had been forced to resign as Prime Minister in a real estate scandal just two years earlier. But Lockheed, after all, was American, and who could prove that Japanese companies were routinely passing along payoffs to high-level officials and politicians, with the same impunity as did their American counterparts? Earlier this year came two more American aircraft scandals, involving Grumman and McDonnell Douglas. Not even the admission by a former Director General of the Japan Defence Agency that he had accepted a huge, unpublicised 'political contribution' from one of the companies could shake the sense that these were still exceptional episodes – not typical business practices.

It took a silly mistake by two assistants in the President's office of Japan's KDD (Kokusai Denshin Denwa, or International Telegraph and Telephone) to expose the nefarious inner workings of a major Japanese corporation. The pair were returning from a routine shopping trip to Europe laden down with nearly $50,000 worth of bric-a-brac of the sort that KDD officials were wont to bestow upon political business contacts and personal friends as well as themselves. At first their offence seemed relatively simple: they had grossly undervalued the goods on their customs form, as would most international travellers. But they panicked under scrutiny by customs officials and confessed the gifts were not for their own personal purposes but for their superiors in the Home Office. From there the KDD scandal exploded into a gripping newspaper serial, featuring the resignations of several of the company's top officials;

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Ralph STEADman wishes the whole population would STRIKE for a LOWER COST OF LIVING instead of more money!
☆! Best Idea for Industry Award 1979
'ERE NORMAN QUESTION: WHY ARE CRACKERS ALWAYS FULL O' RUBBISH?
ANSWER: 'COS WE CAN'T SEE WHAT WE'RE BUYING BEFORE WE PAY FOR 'EM!
1980
Norman and Nora Normal* wish you a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Statesman
*THE DRUNKEN VOICE OF BRITAIN.

NOTES

searches of their homes and offices, which were found to be stuffed with many more 'gifts' as well as paintings and other artworks; and revelations of wild spending at fancy restaurants.

The figures for KDD profligacy are staggering even in a nation in which annual 'legitimate' corporate entertainment expenses consume one per cent of Japan's Gross National Product. (The declared cost of business entertainment for the 1978 fiscal year was more than £10 billion – slightly above the military budget's share of 0.9 per cent of the nation's trillion-dollar GNP.) The office of the KDD president squandered more than $3 million last year, while the company invested another $4 million in entertainment, travel, advertising and publicity – all the while reaping some $50 million in profits. KDD executives shrewdly courted politicians of widely varying hues. To a parliamentary member of the Japan Socialist Party went some $2,000 in department store gift certificates. To the Director-General of the office of Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira, went some $10,000 for tickets to a fund-raising dinner.

Payoffs have been countenanced at every level since the re-emergence of Japan's conservative establishment after the American post-war occupation. The semi-governmental Japan Railway Construction Corporation, for instance, has thrived on contracts for the relatively clean, and money-losing, Japan National Railway system. Now it appears that the railway corporation was involved not only in political payoffs but in falsifying travel expenses for its own employees. In one case it turned out the government knew what was happening as long ago as 1973, when Tanaka was Prime Minister, but chose to cover up so that the public would not lose confidence. Other newly exposed culprits include the Japan Corporation and the Environment Agency.

This month some 2,000 tenants met to protest against corruption in the Housing Corporation, and some 300,000 tenants signed petitions demanding no more rent increases in view of the Corporation's long record of false accounting. Protests against KDD's mammoth profits, in the meantime, have forced it to lower some of its inflated rates on overseas telephone calls and cables.

No homes for foreigners

Andrew Arden writes: Foreigners who are homeless in the UK may find it a lot more difficult to get housed by local authorities after a decision in the Court of Appeal last week. So far, the vast majority of court decisions under the Homeless Persons Act have been favourable to the homeless person (NS 8 June and 10 August 1979). In interlocutory hearings (when county courts have applied the 'usual' test of whether to grant an immediate order compelling a council to house someone until a full trial can take place), judges have invariably found that the 'balance of convenience' lay against the local authority. But now Lord Denning has put a stop to such unwonted, wholesale humanity.

Two Italian families, the De Falcos and the Silvestris, came to England seeking work, as they are entitled to under EEC regulations. Mr De Falco and Mr Silvestri both found jobs in the area of Crawley Borough Council. The De Falcos had been staying with relatives, but were asked to move out because their hosts were expecting another child and there was not enough room. The Silvestris had arranged accommodation for themselves before leaving Italy, but this fell through while they were *en route* for England. Both familes applied to Crawley for assistance under the Homeless Persons Act. When Crawley refused, the families sued, using the procedure for claiming damages and obtaining an injunction which had been approved by the Court of Appeal in the recent case of *Thornton v Kirklees MDC*.

The local authority did not argue that it owed no duty at all to foreigners. As workers of a Common Market member state, they are entitled under EEC regulations to the same housing (and other) benefits as nationals of the state in which they are living. Instead, the authority found that the families had become intentionally homeless, on the ground that they had come to this country without having permanent accommodation to go to. That reason was quite clearly bad law, since the Act says a person can only be intentionally homeless if he (or she) has left accommodation which he could have continued to occupy. However, in the interlocutory appeal (which followed the refusal of a High Court judge to make an interim order for Crawley to house the families pending trial), Lord Denning generously reinterpreted Crawley's reasons, so as to incorporate a finding that the families had, indeed, left accommodation in Italy in which they could have gone on living.

It was conceded that the authority's decision did not comply with the government's Code of Guidance under the Act. But Lord Denning held that authorities were not bound by the Code: they were only obliged to *have regard to* its terms, and could depart from it in a proper case. This was one such proper case. It would have been different, he suggested, if the families had come from Yorkshire. But it would be most serious for an authority such as Crawley, with Gatwick Airport within its boundaries, if anyone from the Common Market could fly in, stay with relatives for a short period, and then claim housing in an overcrowded borough. 'They should be able to do better than King Canute. He

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bade the rising tide at Southampton to come no farther. It took no notice. He got his feet wet.' His Lordship trusted that the Crawley councillors would keep theirs dry – 'against the new advancing tide'.

Lord Denning's decision abandoned the normal injunction rule, that the principal test for an interim order is where the 'balance of convenience' lies and subtituted the test of whether there is a *prima facie* case that the authority is wrong in its decision so that, on the face of it, the homeless person is likely to succeed in full trial. The case is thoroughly disturbing, as it implies that different tests can be applied to foreigners from those applied to British nationals. By taking such a line, local authorities are trying, in practice, to exercise an immigration, rather than a housing, function and may be in breach of the Race Relations Act, which outlaws discrimination in the provision of housing against people of foreign national origin or nationality.

Pinochet's past

Peter Godfrey writes: The Catholic church in Chile has discovered the location of three mass graves. In the largest, 300 crosses, mostly without names, have been found in 'patio 29' of Santiago general cemetery. They are overgrown with weeds, suggesting that relatives were never notified of the burials. An anonymous informant told the church's Vicariate of Solidarity – the only independent organisation in Chile to enjoy any political immunity under General Pinochet's regime – that lorry-loads of corpses had been brought to the cemetery, two or three to a box, in October, 1973, shortly after the military coup which overthrew Salvador Allende. The corpses, thought to include those of peasants and railway workers, were marked with bullet wounds, and some had been decapitated or had limbs removed. One woman who ascertained, after exhaustive enquiries, that her disappeared son was buried in 'patio 29'. has had her application for his body to be exhumed refused.

Another 'denunciation' by the church resulted in the discovery of the remains of 21 people, mostly workers in a paper mill, near Concepción, in southern Chile. They were shot by rural police in September, 1973, and secretly buried in a pine forest at Yumbel, but subsequently transferred to a common grave after dogs started investigating the site.

Pinochet's government has repeatedly disclaimed all responsibility for such killings, attributing disappearances and any excesses to a state of 'civil war' after the military coup, but the third disclosure, of 14 corpses discovered in the river Maipe in 1976, shows that organised slaughter was still taking place long afterwards. The Vicariate's evidence is that at least five of the victims had their hands and feet tied with wire behind their backs, and their fingers sawn off. A judge investigating the killings said they showed 'a lust for extrerminating'.

These cases confirm that the discovery last January of 25 multilated bodies buried in a disused lime kiln at Lonquén was not an isolated incident, and a new UN report on Chile states that the torture of prisoners is standard practice, and has increased. Meanwhile, the Chilean government recently procrastinated for six months before releasing a heavily censored version of Chaplin's film' 'The Great Dictator', and has banned the television series, 'Holocaust', 'to avoid odious comparisons'.

Patients last in NHS

Ruth Levitt writes: The government's proposals to reorganise the National Health Service (*Patients First*, HMSO, £1.00, published on 11 December 1979) seem unlikely to do much for patients despite the title. What they do promise is further years of upheaval in an already shaken service, and yet another government unwilling to face the really pressing problems.

The idea is that by 1983 two thirds of the area health authorities in England will disappear. The remaining ones (now called single-district areas) will be retained and joined by about 150 new district health authorities. If these changes are to be achieved with no redundancies, many senior administrative and professional staff will be applying for new jobs or opting for early retirement for the second time in less than ten years. The sole aim of the reforms is claimed to be the improvement of services to patients; they will be accompanied by several managerial and administrative changes. Any financial savings to result from this will take many years to be realised and may not even reach £30m annually when the whole process is complete.

These plans are the government's response to the widespread dissatisfaction with the structure, and confirm that sacrificial victims are often sought when tricky problems refuse to go away. That is, although the abolition of area health authorities may well simplify the appearance of the structure, there is no guarantee that it will make the NHS more in touch with local needs and problems. Yet this is what the government claims as its objective.

The proposals leave out a lot of important detail and are confusingly vague. They also raise doubts about some of the more worthwhile aspects introduced by the reorganisation in 1974 (including community health councils, workers' representatives on health authorities and collaboration between the NHS and local authority services). Above all, the government betrays its inability or unwillingness to differentiate between prejudice and evidence by refusing to admit that the major problems of the NHS cannot be tackled by tinkering about with the structure. By landing the NHS with another upheaval, attention is cleverly being shifted away from the most urgent concerns. These include, first, the marginal impact of clinical medicine on the health of the population, secondly the persistent inequalities between social classes and regions in health and health services, and third the need to improve prevention of ill-health through improvements in services and policies outside the NHS.

Regions cheated of EEC funds

Bruce Reed writes: This month's call by the EEC's Economic and Social Committee – which represents industry, unions and general interest groups – for a larger community Regional Development Fund (RDF) is unlikely to make much difference to Clydeside, Merseyside, Tyneside or any of Britain's depressed industrial regions, even if it is accepted at the next meeting of EEC Finance Ministers.

Since 1975, when George Thomas got the regional fund off the ground, the UK has received over £300 million to help finance individual industrial projects and industrial infrastructure schemes, all in the government-designated Assisted Areas (most of Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the North of England). However, this is not a complete subsidy, as the UK contributes about £100 to the Fund for every £135 returned.

But even the money which reaches Britain rarely makes the well publicised recipients – companies and local authorities – any better off. The money awarded to industrialists stays with the government, to help pay for their own regional programme and local authorities have their borrowing limits cut by the Treasury by the exact amount of any RDF grant. Thus there is no increase in capital spending in the depressed areas. A few ratepayers are saved a couple of pence a year because part of the cost of a handful of local authority projects is funded by an RDF grant instead of all the money having to be borrowed. This is the only benefit which the people living in the assisted areas have seen from EEC regional spending. The EEC Social Fund – which pays for retraining – is used to offset the cost of that part of central government's national retraining scheme which happens to fall in the assisted areas.

The implications of this policy – started by the Labour government – are serious at a time when the government is cutting regional aid. Already this has been cut by almost a half in real terms since 1975. As EEC regional spending increases, UK regional spending declines.

This pattern has partly been the result of the system by which EEC money was handed out on the basis of predetermined national quotas: governments simply forwarded to Brussels industrial development projects from their assisted areas, to get part of their annual allocation. To try to stop this, in February the EEC decided, despite stiff British opposition, that 5 per cent of the RDF should be outside the quota system. This money will be used primarily in the UK to improve the physical environment of areas affected by the rundown of steel and shipbuilding and to try and encourage the development of small and medium sized businesses in those areas. This will involve £28 million going to the steel areas and £11 million to shipbuilding areas. In addition Northern Ireland will get £16 million to boost tourism. With any luck some of this money should get through to the areas for which it is intended instead of being used to save on government spending generally.

Scandal in Glasgow

Brian Wilson writes: One of the most undignified months in the history of Glasgow local politics – during which both Conservative and Labour minority adminstrations resigned – has come to an end with the establishment of a 'fire brigade' committee to douse the flames of any controversy which might threaten the existence of the Labour administration. As the Conservative leader, Baillie John Young, said 'Nobody wanted to go on changing administrations like one changes one's suit', claiming that many of the differences had just been over the interpretation of standing orders, at which a sub-committee was now looking.

Labour were robbed of their normal hegemony over Europe's largest housing authority largely due to a house-letting scandal which helped the Scottish National Party at the 1977 elections. A recent committee of enquiry into the affair named three Labour councillors for improperly involving themselves with officials in the allocation of council houses. One – former housing chairwoman Cathie Cantley, who was dropped as a candidate in the 1977 election following her role in gaining a council house for her son's mistress – says the inquiry is a sham and claims that many other councillors were also involved.

In an attempt to minimise the chance of improper queue jumping the Tories and SNP are likely to support a move to abolish the Housing Special Cases sub-committee. But Labour is opposing this, running the risk, as one SNP councillor says, of being seen at the election as 'supporting a system which gives councillors a say in who gets the best houses.'

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INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY
Patrick Wintour

A Secret document reveals boardroom manoeuvres

Post Office stamps on workers

TWO YEARS AGO, in the heady days of the Bullock report on industrial democracy, the Labour Government put seven union nominees on the main board of the Post Office, Britain's largest employers, grandly claiming that this two year experiment represented the beginning of 'the socialisation of public ownership'. Last week the Tories killed the experiment by refusing – in the face of union enthusiasm – to reappoint their union nominees to the board. Sir Keith Joseph made this decision within two days of receiving an interim but lengthy Warwick University report on the PO worker directors which had been commissioned by the Post Office. The report was based on 118 interviews with non-union board members and top management, 72 interviews with full time union officials and 50 interviews with the union nominees. But neither Sir Keith nor his junior Minister Adam Butler had taken the time to read the report before they made their decision. Butler, whose party is supposedly in favour of worker participation, said he abandoned the country's major example of participation because there was no mutual agreement about the scheme's benefit. This is a nice way of saying that Sir William Barlow, the chairman of the Post Office, had threatened to resign if the union nominees remained.

The unpublished Warwick report – which is presently 'totally confidential to the Post Office' – has been denounced as 'unscientific' by the Post Office management. To which one union board member replies 'they would say that, wouldn't they?' The report paints an alarming picture of a board only nominally in control of the Post Office. It also bluntly concludes: 'the unions' demand for representation at the board was based on the desire to be involved at an early stage in policy formulation. It does not seem that the Post Office board has permitted such involvement to any significant degree'. The Warwick University team of Eric Batstone, Anthony Ferner and Michael Terry, assert:

> It is clear that issues with industrial relations, particularly negotiating, implications are now often handled outside the main board. Where major industrial relations questions are discussed at the board the account is clearly incomplete. We have come across instances in which union nominees appear to be completely unaware that major strategic issues are being dealt with outside the board. Key board members appear to play an active role behind the scenes on many issues and rarely are union nominees included in this.

The Warwick team found that the main board were presented with no options in 90 per cent of the material that was put before them and say 'it is clear that retricted options facing the board and the exclusion of certain significant issues from its agenda are a direct reflection of the presence of union nominees.' For example, no alternatives were offered to the board when they discussed major aspects of exchange modernisation. Issues with defence implications were entirely excluded and financial forecasts were doctored to hide the expected increase in wages or to camouflage assumptions about the cost of an expected dispute. One Telecomms director says:

> there must be occasions when you circumvent certain things. For example, if System X manpower comes to the crunch and you have to prepare a paper on the management options, clearly this cannot come before the full board. It would hinder the negotiating position.

Warwick claim that management arrived at decisions in other bodies and then went to the board, presenting a united front. 'Management do not on the whole criticise each other openly at the board.' In the first year of industrial democracy the number of issues discussed first by the management board – composed entirely of full-time managers – before going to the main board had doubled. Early on in the experiment the union nominees became aware that more and more decisions were being made by the management board. The unions fought a successful battle to be given sight of its minutes.

But Sir William Barlow was not so easily beaten. He refused to allow the main board or the management board any longer to see the minutes of the committee of the managing directors of businesses. This represented a major and novel break in the chain of command. Barlow's justification was that providing the main board with the minutes of the managing directors' committee would be incompatible with his policy of decentralisation, adopted both out of expediency and as a matter of principle.

The result was that the main board came, in the words of one manager, 'to be fed with pap'. As Warwick say: 'many managers have admitted that the style and content of board meetings have substantially altered in an attempt to exclude sensitive matters from debate'. This was because of 'quite clear series of decisions made by the businesses'. Union board members knew, particularly in the second year of the experiment, that they were being excluded from vital areas but found it difficult to reverse the tide of distrust that the management had for them.

Warwick's statistics broadly substantiate the union nominees' fears of exclusion. In 1977, the year before industrial democracy, two thirds of the (non-routine) items discussed by the postal managing director's committee were not discussed by the main board. In the first year of industrial democracy the figure rose to four-fifths. The unions in their submission to the government – also marked in strictest confidence – tried to pin down power in the Post Office and argue for access to the real forum of decision making:

> we are totally dissatisfied with the role of the management board. Its continued existence is an obstacle to the establishment of trust and it performs no role which the full board itself could not perform. We should consider the need to extend the . . . experiment to the business level.

But, as a Head of Division in Telecomms said, the cat and mouse game would still continue, 'certain issues would just be kept away and discussed elsewhere by some other group, so that the work would go on as before.' This was exactly the experience of European workers, outlined by Batstone in a research paper for the Bullock Committee. Warwick came across only one manager in the whole of the Post Office who wanted workers' democracy within the individual businesses of posts and telecomms.

The experiment faced greater structural difficulties than the management's insistence on their right to manage. The Post Office had a new chairman, a bigger board and, with one exception, an influx of new management board members. The union nominees had over thirty years' connection with the Post Office but only two executive members had more than one year's experience. As one Telecomms manager commented: 'they can't look at technical questions. It's ridiculous there are no engineers on the board. So the board makes no decisions or stupid ones, in which case the Business simply doesn't carry them out.'

THERE is, of course, a real danger that even a very experienced board would, in the particular circumstances of the Post Office, just become a rubber stamp. Seventeen people, meeting for three hours every month, receiving papers on a Thursday for a meeting on the following Tuesday, are charged with running a diverse corporation employing 450,000 people. It is the easiest thing in the world for the full-time managers to conspire against such a body. Warwick quotes as a fairly typical management view: 'the board has little relevance – if you wanted to select a board where industrial democracy would do least harm it would be the Post Office.'

In practice, most thought that it was only the chairman who could change major proposals with which he was unhappy; others managed only small modifications. Even in the one area where a main board traditionally concerns itself – developing corporate objectives – the board was 'notably unsuccessful'. With the separation of the posts and telecomms businesses looming large, Warwick reported: 'there have clearly been strong efforts by the businesses (in particular telecomms) to resist the imposition of corporate policies', particularly over auditing controls. 'Attempts by the board to control the businesses are hampered by the fact that it is dependent on the businesses themselves for information.'

So why were the unions so enthusiastic that the experiment continued? Partly, they hoped to widen their role, but also they thought they were having a significant impact on some issues. They argue that the Post Office engineers' work to rule over the 35 hour week and the introduction of new technology were handled more wisely as a result of the union board members. Similarly, they feel they helped prevent a postal workers' strike in the spring and improved the approach to telecomms regrading.

However these are modest victories and the Warwick report makes clear that much of the trouble was caused because there was never any agreed management-union criterion to judge the success of the experiment. The management saw industrial democracy as 'a means to essentially unchanged ends – managerial ends.' They wanted greater speed of decision making and say the scheme failed to produce this – even though Warwick report that only in a quarter of cases of delay were the views of the union nominees a key factor. As Warwick hint, for the scheme to have worked it was necessary for the management to recognise that there is indeed a conflict of interest between management and workers.

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CANADA
Charlotte Gray

What are the chances of a Liberal comeback?

Joe Clark fails to deliver

ALTHOUGH THE END of Joe Clark's 206 days as Prime Minister was abrupt, and unexpected until a few hours before it happened last Thursday, his government had been looking shaky for some time. The Tories won the May election not on their intrinsic attraction but because Canadians were tired of the rival charms of Pierre Trudeau. The new minority government arrived in Ottawa with $7 billion worth of campaign promises, which proved hopelessly inappropriate. They also tried to stick to pledges to move the Canadian embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, risking an Arab oil embargo until the idea was canned, and they tried to privatise Petrocan, the state oil company, despite obvious public dislike of the scheme. Moreover, Clark did not recall Parliament until four months after the election, which gave the lie to the big talk of respect for democratic institutions.

When Parliament reconvened on 9 October the lack of consistent Tory policies soon emerged. Clark tried to establish a new style of leadership – managerial rather then autocratic: consensus instead of confrontation – but little of substance emerged through the floss of apparatchik jargon. He promised to govern as though he led a majority government – despite depending on the support of the five right-wing Social Credit MPs from Quebec – but proceeded to bog down in his own determination to avoid conflict.

In fights with the provinces over ownership of resources or a national energy policy, he either just gave away the shop, in the case of Newfoundland's offshore resources, or was paralysed by stone-walling from provincial premiers. He had no strategy for the times when talking failed. The Tory cabinet collectively created an impression of uncertainty, confusion and incompetence. One political commentator suggested that 'had slavery been an issue the Tories would have fudged it'. On the few issues with which they were identified, such as new freedom of information legislation, they hadn't got their act together. They introduced radical new proposals for access to classified information, but were prepared to tolerate a police raid on a journalist's home to retrieve a routine document. Their wails about the burden of inherited mismanagement and debt began to sound shrill and monotonous.

They finally got tough with a budget which would make Canadians pay more for transportation, heating fuel, tobacco, alcohol and unemployment insurance. Petrol prices were to rise immediately by 18 cents (7.5p), and those proposals designed to help low income earners were outweighed by Tory plans to give home owners a tax break. The impact of the tighten-our-belts budget was far more severe on the low-paid than on middle and high income earners. The only people pleased by the budget were stockbrokers, and the people most upset were cab drivers.

John Crosbie, the Conservative Minister of Finance, claimed that his 'realistic budget' would bring long-term stability to the troubled Canadian economy by reducing the Federal deficit, but it was too late: the Opposition had already smelt blood. A week before the budget was announced, a Gallup poll had been published which showed that the Tories had slipped 10 per cent in popularity in six months and now trailed the Liberals by 19 points. The New Democratic Party, with 23 per cent of popular support, were only 5 points behind them. Earlier, the Tories had done spectacularly badly in two by-elections. The Liberals, it seems, decided to seize the initiative and combined with the NDP to kill the government in a no confidence motion because of its 'outright betrayal of election promises to lower interest rates, cut taxes and to stimulate growth.'

The Liberals are not in great shape for an election. It is only three weeks since Pierre Trudeau announced his resignation – the only known instance, it was said at the time, of a ship leaving the sinking rats. The heir-apparent, John Turner, announced three days before the Tory defeat that he wasn't interested in the job. The party coffers are empty and the party machine, unlike that of the Conservatives, is not on a war footing. But the one lesson Liberals learnt last May was to go when the light is green. They left the last election so late that they had no room for manoeuvre: now they argue that there is no point waiting, whatever their problems, because the Tories could yet learn to govern if allowed to stick around. They also argue that Trudeau as a born-again leader, free from the shadow of Turner waiting in the wings and sanitised by six months of lying low, could put fresh heart in the troops.

The coming fight will be dirty. As MPs streamed out of the Commons after the 10 o'clock vote on Thursday 13 December, tempers flared and the rhetoric flowed. Crosbie spoke of the Liberals' arrogance and 'lust for power'. Clark clung to his chairman of the board style and berated the Opposition for 'disrupting the business of the nation'. The Tory line will be that the Liberals didn't have the decency to give them a chance. But Tories will have a hard time fighting an election on the Budget proposals and the argument that Canadians must sacrifice present comfort for a balanced Federal Budget in five years' time. Last election, 40 year old Clark was given the benefit of the doubt, and a sympathetic hearing for his tales of Liberal mismanagement. This time he will be dogged by his own mistakes.

Denys Blakeway

Contempt and the Thorpe juror

THE HEARING of the Attorney-General's complaint against the NEW STATESMAN for contempt of court concluded last week. Judgment will be given next month by Lord Widgery, the Lord Chief Justice, and Mr Justice Park. The case arose from an interview with one of the jurors who served in the trial of Jeremy Thorpe, which was published in the NS on 27 July 1979.

Sir Michael Havers did not appear himself, but was represented by Mr Simon Brown. Mr Brown argued that the interview published in the NS was 'the thin end of the wedge'. A convention of jury-room secrecy, bolstered by contempt law, had now been ignored too frequently.

The only evidence Mr Brown advanced was taken from an affidavit by the editor of the NEW STATESMAN, which cited 14 articles, spread over many years, in which the proceedings of juries had been described from the inside. (The authors included Graham Greene, C. H. Rolph and the economist Ely Devons.) After some argument involving Lord Widgery and Mr Geoffrey Robertson, counsel for the NEW STATESMAN, it was conceded that the affidavit merely established the fact that editors had not previously been prosecuted for publishing the remarks of jurors, even in examples where the juror was named and the case identified.

Mr Brown's final argument was that if the judges believed that revelations by jurors constituted an interference with 'the administration of justice as a continuing process', then it was a prima facie case of contempt.

Mr Robertson argued for the NS that there is no obligation of secrecy in the juror's oath, no precedent of real application, and an overwhelming authority in favour of allowing revelation of the jury's actions after the conclusion of a trial. Furthermore, law already exists to prevent possibly harmful effects of such revelations: the libel law, and specific instances of contempt law forbidding victimisation, scandalising the court, or breach of precise orders made by a judge.

A debate in the House of Lords in 1967 made it clear that there was no law against jurors speaking about their experiences. This was stated by the Lord Chancellor of the day, who said that he had himself advised newspaper editors to that effect. This debate was followed by a report of the Criminal Law Revision Committee in 1968. The members of the committee, several of them highly distinguished judges, came to the same conclusion.

In this particular case, the NEW STATESMAN had done nothing to scandalise the court, or interfere with the due administration of justice. The juror in question was not pressurised: he himself made the initial approach. The interview was handled by two experienced journalists, David Leigh and Peter Chippindale. No payment was asked for by the juror, nor was any payment made.

No attempt was made to sensationalise the article, which raised a number of issues of legitimate public interest: particularly, the effect on the jury's mind of the payment of money by the *Telegraph* group to the witness Peter Bessell (especially the so-called 'escalation clause' which entitled Bessell to higher payment if Thorpe were to be convicted), and the fact that several defendants escaped scot-free who might have been convicted on lesser charges had the prosecution been framed differently.

Criminal law, said Mr Robertson, should not be created where there was considerable doubt as to the mischief supposedly caused. If there was need for regulation, this should proceed by legislation – but legislation which should face the fact that justice cannot be a 'cloistered virtue'. It was the NEW STATESMAN's conviction that open discussion could only strengthen the jury system against its detractors.

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Anna Coote

New challenge to jury vetting

THE LEGALITY of the 'Guidelines for Jury Vetting', introduced in 1975 by the then Attorney General, Sam Silkin, has been called into question by an admission from the office of the Attorney General that the prosecution has no legal right to peremptory challenge of jurors. According to statutes which date back to 1305 and which have been amended as recently as 1977, defence counsel can challenge up to three jurors, all on a peremptory basis (that is, without having to give reasons for wanting them to stand down); the prosecution, on the other hand, can ask any number of jurors to 'stand by for the Crown', but they must have reasons for doing so – although these need not be divulged until the jury panel is exhausted. Moreover, the prosecution can only ask a juror to stand by for a specific cause, which is narrowly defined by law: either because the juror is disqualified under the rules of eligibility for jury service; or because the juror is biased to the extent of already having made up his or her mind about the particular case about to be tried. These points were confirmed to the NEW STATESMAN by a spokesman in the Attorney General's office this week.

It has been claimed in the past that the prosecution has a right to make peremptory challenges and this point of law appears to have been overlooked – possibly because jury panels are so large these days that they are rarely exhausted and there is seldom (if ever) a need for the prosecution to divulge the reasons which they are legally obliged to have. Certainly, the practice of vetting jury panels for signs of general bias which *might* have a bearing on the case, or to root out anyone who *might* divulge official secrets (as authorised by the AG's Guidelines) does not seem to be covered by the narrow definition of cause laid down by law. In other words, the Guidelines may be encouraging prosecution counsel to break the law.

Where does that leave individuals who have been found guilty by vetted juries? Vincent Mason, who was found guilty of burglary by a Northampton court last year, applied for leave to appeal against conviction this week (20 December) on the ground that the jury was rigged. In this case, the prosecution took the unusual step of asking *nine* jurors to 'stand by for the Crown'. A key witness will be Jan Walsh, reporter for *Woman* magazine, who happened to be interviewing Northampton police about their jury vetting practices in the very week that Mason was tried. She discovered that the police were routinely giving prosecution counsel lists of jurors with criminal records. When she drew their attention to the Guidelines' stipulation that jury panels should only be vetted in 'exceptional' cases, the Northampton police agreed to drop the practice. It will, of course, be up to the court to decide whether Mason's conviction should be quashed, but his appeal represents an important test of the law.

Two weeks ago, the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire police asked the Divisional Court to set aside a decision made on 4 October by Judge Pickles in the Sheffield Crown Court that the defence should see jurors' criminal records in a trial of two police officers charged with assault. Lord Widgery refused to set the order aside, saying that under Section 10(5) of the Courts Act, he did not have jurisdiction to do so. The Attorney General, who backed the Chief Constable's appeal, is waiting for a transcript of the judgment, to see whether there are grounds for taking the matter to a higher court.

The AG's recent order that jury vetting can only be authorised directly by him (rather than via the DPP) does not affect the dubious legality of the whole procedure.

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PROPERTY
Sue Essex and Tony Gore

Thousands of owner-occupiers face serious housing problems

Time for a new Reform Act?

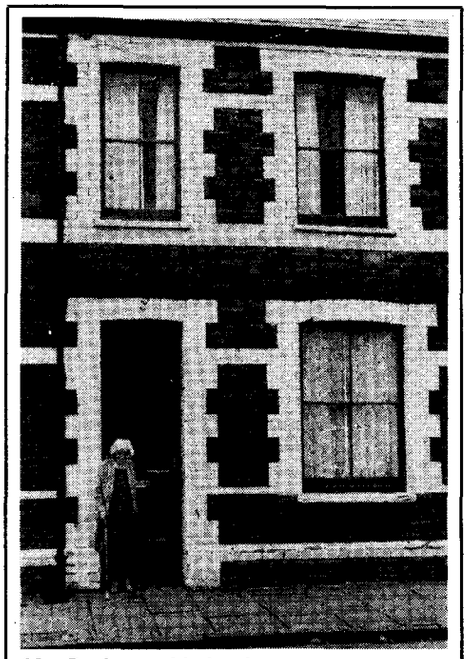
EARLY IN SEPTEMBER Agnes Beale, a 91-year-old widow who lives in Hirwain Street, Cardiff, was amazed to find pushed through her door a notice announcing that her rent would be going up by a staggering 10,900 per cent. The sender of this missive was not some latter-day Rachman but the British Petroleum Pension Fund, owners of about 6,000 similar houses in Cardiff. The rent which they collect from Mrs Beale is the ground rent on the freehold of her property and it has been £2 a year for the last century, during sixty of which years Mrs Beale has lived in the house. This ground rent is now being raised to £220 a year as the lease comes to an end. Mrs Beale, who as the owner of the lease considered herself an owner-occupier, will suddenly become a tenant unless she extends her lease at the new ground rent or buys the freehold from BP for the asking price of £2,500, compared with the house's market value when empty of £8,000.

Mrs Beale is but one of the hundreds of thousands of people who live in property developed on the leasehold principle. Many of these leases are coming to an end, creating serious problems for the leaseholders. Either, people can extend their lease for fifty years at massive ground rent increases. Or, at a time when mortgages are hard to come by, they can try and buy the freehold, being obliged to pay the legal and valuation costs of both sides and – because there is no fixed formula for calculating the price of a freehold – being unaware how much they are likely to have to pay. If they cannot afford either of these options they are in the unenviable position of becoming tenants in houses which they once owned, possibly having legally been obliged to put the house in good condition beforehand.

Most leasehold houses were built before 1914, when large landowners granted 99 year leases to builders who constructed dwellings and then sold them to people who became either owner-occupiers or landlords. In general the age of the dwellings involved suggests that many of the leases are due to expire in the next 10 to 15 years. There are relatively large concentrations in the North-West, the West Midlands and Wales. In South Wales alone there are 200,000 leasehold dwellings, accounting for about a third of the total stock and this is an area where leasehold dwellings are still being built on a significant scale. Many of the older dwellings are tenanted; with the non-resident landlord being the leaseholder.

BP CAME BY their houses when they bought a property company, Western Ground Rents, for £17 million some years ago. Although they were chiefly interested in the commercial property, between 15 and 20 per cent of the portfolio is believed to have been residential. Although they did not seek this particular part of the investment – and would not deliberately go into residential property – BP say they must try and get the best return.

Mr Graham Titford, the chief investment manager of the BP pension fund, is clearly incensed by being, as he sees it, 'continually pilloried in public' for his treatment of the Cardiff leaseholders when his fund owns only 6,000 of the 400,000 leaseholds in Wales. He puts his case clearly: although it is hard for the people who live in the houses when rent increases of this sort are introduced, they have been living virtually rent free for years and cannot expect to go on doing so forever. The residents are really nothing to do with BP – they bought houses on BP's land and if they cannot afford a reasonable rent, then that is a matter for the community as a whole.



Mrs Beale outside her home

Using the term 'rent' in this way confuses the issue slightly. Many leaseholders paid rent before buying their lease on a mortgage – which they also paid for. A low ground rent for the freeholder does not mean the householder got the accommodation for next to nothing. Furthermore Mr Titford's general argument seems to say: pension funds must be allowed to behave as they wish, the capitalist ideology must be dominant and the state must pick up the tab. Mr Titford sees the paradox in a pension fund, an institution with socially desirable aims, pursuing policies which may not have socially desirable results, but says his hands are tied: the pension fund is obliged to act in the best interests of its members and cannot act in a charitable manner. If it did so, any fund member could bring a legal action against the trustees (precedent does not suggest they would have much success, however). The fund must, he says act on commercial criteria, not moral ones, though he hopes – not entirely consistently – that BP does not push things to the limit. However, despite the fact that these houses account for a small, trivial proportion of BP's £400 million worth of investments and that, given the fund's policy of no residential investment, there is no danger of a precedent being set, he is unwilling to make an exception: it is a job for the community.

THE MOST PRESSING job for the community is the reform of the 1967 Leasehold Reform Act, which gives leaseholders some right to acquire the freehold of their property; before this act they relied on voluntary cooperation from the landlord, which was not often forthcoming. Under the 1967 Act leaseholders have the right to acquire the freehold or secure a lease extension so long as they have lived in the house for five out of the previous ten years. But there are daunting obstacles to exercising these rights.

First, the leaseholder is responsible for organising everything concerning the transfer of the freehold. Second, leaseholders are responsible for the freeholder's costs as well as their own. This means that the process can be time-consuming and expensive. As most leaseholders have considerably less financial resources than freeholders this often prevents people from even considering buying the freehold, before worrying about its cost. This, of course, is frequently inflated by high land investment values, which have encouraged the acquisition of whole estates from the erstwhile landed gentry by property companies (see NS 24 August and 7 September 1979).

There are financial obstacles for leaseholders to overcome. With the cutback in local authority mortgages and the concentration on first-time buyers, leaseholders, who are often older people, find it difficult to raise the money to buy the freehold. Leaseholders wishing to improve their houses find building societies unwilling to lend money when there are less than 30 years of the lease to run and councils are not keen to provide improvement grants when there are only ten to fifteen years left in the lease. This results in leaseholders being pushed towards high-cost short-term loans. Further delays are caused by the five year rule and the long wrangles over what is a 'fair' price for a freehold – ultimately settled by the Lands Tribunal as arbitrators.

The effect of such delays on housing conditions can be alarming, coming as they do at a critical stage of the property's life. Owner-occupier leaseholders will not want, and probably cannot afford, to improve their property. Freehold landlords may be similarly disinclined to do anything as the reversion of the land and building allows them to enjoy the redevelopment value.

The ultimate aim of the growing campaign for leasehold reform is the complete abolition of the system (except in, for instance, purpose-built flats). Two immediate reforms would help: the removal of the five year qualification period and a set formula for calculating the value of the freehold.

In practice many freeholders refuse to sell the freehold to unqualified leaseholders and even if a price is agreed, it can be enormous. In addition the qualification period may mean that a house is left vacant and unused because of the shortness of the remaining lease, which makes it 'unsellable', even though this may be in an area of acute housing shortage. A set formula is essential if people are to know in advance exactly how much their house will cost. Already the Tories have accepted a Labour proposal to set up local valuation tribunals, avoiding the expense and delay of the Lands Tribunal, but this is not much good without a new formula. In a letter to the Welsh Leasehold Reform Campaign, Labour leader Jim Callaghan has committed the Labour party to, if necessary, proposing amendments to the Housing Bill dealing with the five year rule and the formula.

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SECRECY
John Field

A more honest approach to history is needed

Sabotaging the public record

ON 2 JANUARY another batch of government papers, 30 years old, are to be opened to the public. But these archives are seriously threatened by the secretive attitudes of the police, the Home Office and defence authorities. In recent years, historians and journalists have been systematically misled, government records have vanished and evidence has been concealed. A committee under Sir Duncan Wilson is currently examining the problem of public records – and its deliberations should be of particular interest to socialists and trade unionists, since some of the most contentious records involve the surveillance and control of the labour movement.

There is a well established procedure for selecting records for preservation. Departmental files are 'weeded' first after five years, then after 25 years the Department and the Public Records Office jointly consider their significance. Most files of importance should be opened to the public at the PRO after 30 years. But there are several serious catches.

Both Labour and Conservative governments have allowed wide exceptions to the 30-year rule; some, such as Metropolitan Police files, remain closed for up to a hundred years. The problem with such arbitrary restrictions on available material is that government departments remain judges in their own cause, with the final say on what may be made public within the 30-year span.

The best-documented instance of manipulation involves Metropolitan Police reports on the Hunger Marchers of the 1930s. Files on the 1933 and 1934 marches were deposited as usual in the PRO, and were opened under the 30-year rule established by the 1967 Act. A young historian who asked to see the files in spring 1970 was told that the police had demanded their return, and that they were now in New Scotland Yard. Dr Ralph Hayburn remembers that he was allowed to see the files at New Scotland Yard only after a lengthy inquiry into the purposes of his research, and in the presence of a constable. Subsequently, the files were returned to the PRO, where they remained until February 1977, when the Metropolitan Police again asked to 'see' them. It now seems that the Home Office intended to withdraw the files, purportedly because their contents might prove embarrassing to individuals named in them*. This, needless to say, was not the case: the Communist miners' leader, Will Paynter, was delighted rather than embarrassed to find himself described as a very dangerous agitator.

The police reports on the hunger marchers might well have disappeared until the year 2034, had it not been for the initiative of an anonymous 'Deep Throat' within the PRO. Before the files could be withdrawn, they were taken by another party and xerox copies were sent to the *Bulletin* of the Society for the Study of Labour History. When the Labour History *Bulletin* published lengthy selections from the records, it became apparent that the police had concealed several crucial items from Dr Hayburn. One suppressed report dealt with police surveillance of a meeting in the House of Commons, which – reassuringly – indicated that the two plainclothes men had arrived late, contenting themselves with a rummage through the waste-bin.

ONE historian working at the PRO found that many of the War Office files he needed were already on loan to a 'Mr Atkin'. After some years, a clerical slip recently revealed that 'Mr Atkin' was not a potential competitor, but a PRO joke: the files had been withdrawn by the department. In Northern Ireland in late 1978 many previously open government records were withdrawn, making life difficult for anyone who wanted to investigate the development of the RUC, removal of Catholics from public office, or relations between Westminster and Stormont. The withdrawn Northern Ireland PRO files included material from the 1920s, covering the civil war and after.

Does it matter that British government records are flushed down the memory hole before historians get their hands on them? The historians certainly think so, although they are divided over how they can best fight back. Some Labour History Society members were unhappy with the decision to publish the hunger march material, on the grounds that it might provoke departments to 'weed' sensitive materials more carefully before they ever get to the PRO. Nevertheless, publication did in fact lead to the return of the original files to the PRO, and has helped PRO staff to establish that, once deposited and opened, records are not to be withdrawn at the whim of the department.

The opportunities opened up by access to 'secret' files can be seen in those works which have been able to use them. E. P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class*, for example, reconstructs much radical and governmental activity from the reports of spies and agents-provocateurs. It is, however, hardly surprising that administrations which espouse no openness in their current work have a faint-hearted approach to historical accuracy.

*The contents of the suppressed police files were discussed by Laurie Flynn 'Hiding the history of the Hunger Marchers', NS 1 September 1978.

Stephen Marks

Department of U-turns

A new town's bid to own its own assets looks like being wrecked on the shoals of monetarist dogma and Ministerial machismo – even though a similar scheme was backed by half the Tory party in what seems the different world of the early 1960s.

Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine has decided that £100m of new town assets – industrial and commercial developments, and building land – should be sold off to the private sector by next March. Stevenage's share comes to £20m. But the local council has launched a private Bill to set up a Stevenage Development Authority, with a council-nominated majority, which would buy the assets of the new town development corporation at market value, and manage them in the interests of the town.

The 1946 New Towns Act envisaged that as new towns were completed, their assets would be transferred to local authorities, thus realising the dream of community ownership of land which had inspired the original garden cities movement. But in 1959 the Conservative Government of the day amended the Act and later set up the New Towns Commission to hold the assets, and cream the profits off for the Treasury. Local councils in the new towns only got the housing stocks of the development corporations, which were welcome, but a drain on income.

By the terms of Stevenage's Bill, the freehold of the industrial and shop property in Stevenage, as well as public buildings and development land, would be vested in the new authority, which would borrow the £55 million needed to pay the Government. The finance charges would be met out of the growing rent income, which in time would yield a massive surplus to be used for the benefit of the town. In the shorter run, there would be a deficit, to be met out of the rates and repaid to the council later.

Councillor Brian Hall, leader of the Labour council, estimates that the break-even point would be reached within ten years. He points to Letchworth garden city, where a similar Bill was passed in 1962, as his model. There, a surplus was made in five years, as against the ten originally forecast.

Since the Letchworth Garden City Corporation was set up, it has made £600,000 available for local amenities. Its surplus last year was £704,000. Projects planned for the near future include a leisure centre, a community hall, an adventure centre, a municipal golf course, mini-buses for local voluntary organisations, and community financing of flats for the elderly – all at no cost to the local authority and ratepayers, and financed solely from the property income.

The Stevenage Bill, as a private measure, will by tradition be allowed a free vote. But so far there are few signs of the Conservative support it needs to pass – in striking contrast to 1962, when the almost identical Letchworth Bill got the support of half the then membership of the Conservative party in the Commons. Its supporters included such present Ministers as William Whitelaw, John Biffen, and Francis Pym.

But today's ideological and economic climate is very different. 'For a local authority to own all a town's assets is unknown, and going too far', junior environment Minister Geoffrey Finsberg told Cllr Hall when a Stevenage delegation came to ask for Government support. 'The way for people to stand on their own feet is through private enterprise, who are better able than a local authority to manage industrial and commercial assets in the interests of a town', the Minister added. The fate of so many of our cities in the years since 1962 has convinced many people of the opposite. But Mr Finsberg also outlined another major Government objection. 'The Government is not prepared to allow its policy of reducing public sector borrowing requirements to be thwarted by a local authority'.

What is more, the property interests will get their guaranteed returns without having to run any of the risk sometimes supposed to be associated with being a developer – for the new town, whose guaranteed growth makes the assets worth having, is entirely a product of public enterprise. Without the government putting up the money for and taking the risk of the original development, the investment opportunity would not exist. For long-term property investors, the security of growth, which siting in a new town gives, makes the properties particularly attractive.

Of course the Stevenage Bill would actually reduce the burden on public spending in all but the shortest run – but by a successful example of public enterprise in action. Far better then for the residents and ratepayers of Stevenage and other new towns to pay toll for ever to property developers. But Mr Finsberg is not entirely unbending. He has promised to consider the case for allowing the town to retain some building land for the future, and the freehold of its own town hall – 'subject to economic conditions'.

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The trouble with 'patriarchy'

Despite the protestations of employers, their activities could be organised quite differently and, in this sense, the working class carries the possibility of doing without the capitalist and thus of abolishing the hierarchies of class. But the biological male person is a more delicate matter altogether and is not to be abolished (by socialist feminists at least).

SHEILA ROWBOTHAM takes a critical look at the concept of 'patriarchy' and concludes that it has hindered, rather than helped, our understanding of the relationships between men and women. A new historical approach to the subject is needed.

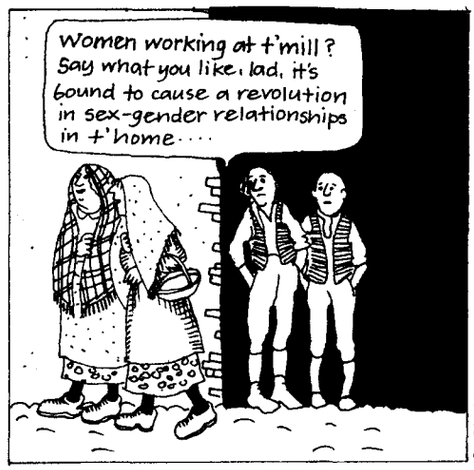
WHEN CONTEMPORARY FEMINISTS began to examine the world from a new perspective, bringing their own experience to bear on their understanding of history and modern society, they found it was necessary to distinguish women's subordination as a sex from class oppression. Inequality between men and women was not just a creation of capitalism: it was a feature of all societies for which we had reliable evidence. It was a separate phenomenon, which needed to be observed in connection with, rather than simply as a response to, changes that occurred in the organisation and control of production. So the term 'patriarchy' was pressed into service – as an analytical tool which might help to describe this vital distinction.

The term has been used in a great variety of ways. 'Patriarchy' has been discussed as an ideology which arose out of men's power to exchange women between kinship groups; as a symbolic male principle; and as the power of the father (its literal meaning). It has been used to express men's control over women's sexuality and fertility; and to describe the institutional structure of male domination. Recently the phrase 'capitalist patriarchy' has suggested a form peculiar to capitalism. Zilla Eisenstein, who has edited an anthology of writings under that heading, defines patriarchy as providing 'the sexual hierarchical ordering of society for political control'.[1]

There was felt to be a need (not confined to feminists) for a wider understanding of power relationships and hierarchy than was offered by current marxist ideas. And with that came the realisation that we needed to resist not only the outer folds of power structures but their inner coils. For their hold over our lives through symbol, myth and archetype would not dissolve automatically with the other bondages even in the fierce heat of revolution. There had to be an inner psychological and spiritual contest, along with the confrontation and transformation of external power.

However, the word 'patriarchy' presents problems of its own. It implies a universal and historical form of oppression which returns us to biology – and thus it obscures the need to recognise not only biological difference, but also the multiplicity of ways in which societies have defined gender. By focusing upon the bearing and rearing of children ('patriarchy' = the power of the father) it suggests there is a single determining cause of women's subordination. This either produces a kind of feminist base-superstructure model to contend with the more blinkered versions of marxism, or it rushes us off on the misty quest for the original moment of male supremacy. Moreover, the word leaves us with two separate systems in which a new male/female split is implied. We have patriarchy oppressing women and capitalism oppressing male workers. We have biological reproduction on the one hand and work on the other. We have the ideology of 'patriarchy' opposed to the mode of production, which is seen as a purely economic matter.

'PATRIARCHY' IMPLIES a structure which is fixed, rather than the kaleidoscope of forms within which women and men have encountered one another. It does not carry any notion of how women might act to transform their situation as a sex. Nor does it even convey a sense of how women have resolutely manoeuvred for a better position within the general context of subordination – by shifting for themselves, turning the tables, ruling the roost, wearing the trousers, hen-pecking, gossiping, hustling, or (in the words of a woman I once overheard) just 'going drip, drip at him'. 'Patriarchy' suggests a fatalistic submission which allows no space for the complexities of women's defiance.



Jo Nesbitt

It is worth remembering every time we use words like 'class' and 'gender' that they are only being labelled as structures for our convenience, because human relationships move with such complexity and speed that our descriptions freeze them at the point of understanding. Nancy Hartsock[2] recalls Marx's insistence that we should regard 'every historically developed social form as in fluid movement'; thus we must take into account its 'transient nature not less than its momentary existence'. Within marxism there is at least a possibility of a dialectical unity of transience and moment. But it seems to me that the concept of 'patriarchy' offers no such prospect. We have stretched its meaning in umpteen different ways, but there is no transience in it at all. It simply refuses to budge.

A word which fails to convey movement is not much help when it comes to examining the differences between the subordination of women, and class. The capitalist is defined by his or her ownership of capital. This is not the same kettle of fish at all as a biological male person. Despite the protestations of employers, their activities could be organised quite differently and, in this sense, the working class carries the possibility of doing without the capitalist and thus of abolishing the hierarchies of class. But a biological male person is a more delicate matter altogether and is not to be abolished (by socialist feminists at least).

It is not sexual difference which is the problem, but the social inequalities of gender – the different kinds of power societies have given to sexual differences, and the hierarchical forms these have imposed on human relationships. Some aspects of male-female relationships are evidently not simply oppressive, but include varying degrees of mutual aid. The concept of 'patriarchy' has no room for such subtleties, however.

Unless we have a sense of these reciprocities and the ways they have changed among different classes, along with the inequalities between men and women, we cannot explain why women have perceived different aspects of their relationship to men to be oppressive at different times. We cannot explain why genuine feelings of love and friendship are possible between men and women, and boys and girls, or why people have acted together in popular movements. In times of revolution (such as the Paris Commune, the early days of Russian communism, or more recent liberation struggles in developing countries), women's public political action has often challenged not only the ruling class, the invader or the coloniser, but also the men's idea of women's role. Less dramatically in everyday life, men's dependence on women in the family, in the community and at work, is as evident as women's subordination – and the two often seem to be inextricably bound together. Some feminists regard this as an elaborate trick, but I think it is precisely within these shifting interstices that women have manoeuvred and resisted. We thus need an approach which can encompass both the conflict and the complementary association between the sexes.

IF WE COULD DEVELOP an historical concept of sex-gender relationships, this would encompass changing patterns of male control and its congruence or incongruence with various aspects of women's power. It would enable us to delineate the specific shapes of sex-gender relationships within different social relationships, without submerging the experiences of women in those of men, or vice versa. If we stopped viewing patriarchy and capitalism as two separate interlocking systems, and looked instead at how sex-gender as well as class and race relations have developed historically, we could avoid a simple category 'woman' – who must either be a matriarchal stereotype or a hopelessly downtrodden victim, and whose fortunes rise and

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fall at the same time as all her sisters. We could begin to see women and men born into relationships within families which are not of their making. We could see how their ideas of themselves and other people, their work, habits and sexuality, their participation in organisation, their responses to authority, religion and the state, and the expression of their creativity in art and culture – how all these things are affected by relations in the family as well as by class and race. But sex-gender relationships are clearly not confined to the family (we are not just sex-beings in the family and class-beings in the community, the state and at work): like class relations, they permeate all aspects of life.

Equally, we inherit the historical actions and experience of people in the past through institutions and culture – and the balance of sex-gender relations is as much a part of this inheritance as is class. The changes which men and women make within these prevailing limitations need not be regarded simply as a response to the reorganisation of production, nor even as a reflection of class struggle. Indeed, we could see these shifts in sex-gender relationships as *contributing* historically towards the creation of suitable conditions for people to make things differently and perceive the world in new ways.

Rosalind Petchesky has argued that

> ... if we understand that patriarchal kinship relations are not static, but like class relations, are characterised by antagonism and struggle, then we begin to speculate that women's consciousness and their periodic attempts to resist or change the dominant kinship structures will themselves affect class relations.[3]

Relations between men and women are also characterised by certain reciprocities, so we cannot assume the antagonism is a constant factor. There are times when class or race solidarity are much stronger than sex-gender conflict and times when relations within the family are a source of mutual resistance to class power. Nonetheless, the approach suggested by Petchesky opens up an exciting way of thinking about women's and men's position in the past, through which we can locate sex-gender relations in the family and see how they are present within all other relationships between men and women in society.

HOWEVER, WE NEED to be cautious about the assumptions we bring to the past. For instance, women have seen the defining features of oppression very differently at different times. Large numbers of children, for example, could be regarded as a sign of value and status, whereas most Western women now would insist on their right to restrict the numbers of children they have, or to remain childless. Feminist anthropologists are particularly aware of the dangers of imposing the values of Western capitalism on women of other cultures. But we can colonise women in the past, too, by imposing modern values.

We also need to be clear about which groups we are comparing in any given society, and to search for a sense of movement within each period. For instance, the possibilities for women among the richer peasantry in the Middle Ages were clearly quite different from those of poor peasants without land. And presumably these were not the same before and after the Black Death. Change – whether for better or worse – does not necessarily go all one way between the classes, nor even between their various sub-strata, and the same is true of changes which varying modes of production have brought to sex-gender relationships. The growth of domestic industry, for example, is usually associated with the control of the father over the family. But it could also alter the domestic division of labour, because women's particular work skills were vital to the family economy at certain times in the production process. This might have made it easier for women in domestic industry to question sexual hierarchy than for peasant women.

Similarly, nineteenth century capitalism exploited poor women's labour in the factories, isolated middle-class women in the home, and forced a growing body of impecunious gentlewomen on to the labour market. Yet at the same time it brought working class women into large scale popular

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movements at work and in the community, in the course of which some of them demanded their rights as a sex while resisting class oppression. Out of domestic isolation, the extreme control of middle-class men over their wives and daughters, and the impoverished dependence of unmarried women, came the first movement of feminists.

An historical approach to sex-gender relations could help us to understand why women radicalised by contemporary feminism have found the present division of domestic labour and men's continued hold over women's bodies and minds to be particularly oppressive. These were not really the emphases of nineteenth century feminism. What then are the specific antagonisms we have encountered within sex-gender relationships? And what possibilities do they imply for change?

IT HAS OFTEN been said that as women we have come to know that the personal is 'political' because we have been isolated in the personal sphere. I think this is only half the story. We *were* isolated in the personal sphere, but some of us were hurtled dramatically out of it by the expansion of education and the growth of administrative and welfare work, while some (working-class and black women) were never so luxuriously confined. What is more, modern capitalism has created forms of political control and social care, and has produced new technologies and methods of mass communication, which have disturbed and shifted the early nineteenth-century division of private and public spheres. As a result, the direct and immediate forms through which men have controlled women have been *both* reinforced *and* undermined. Kinship relations have increasingly become the province of the state (we have to obey certain rules about the way we arrange our private lives in order to qualify for welfare benefits, for example). Contraceptive technology has enabled women to separate sexual pleasure from procreation. And the scope for sexual objectification has grown apace with the development of the visual media. Men are being sold more strenuously than ever the fantasy of controlling the ultimate feminine, just as their hold over real women is being resisted. Women are meanwhile being delivered the possibility of acting out male-defined fantasy of ultimate femininity in order to compete with other women for men. All the oppressive features of male culture have been thrown into relief and have served to radicalise women: who does the housework, unequal pay and access to jobs, violence in the home, rape, the denial of abortion rights, prostitution, lack of nursery provision, and male-dominated and exclusively heterosexual attitudes towards sex and love.

This convoluted state of affairs has created a new kind of political consciousness in socialist feminism. In tussling with the specifics of sex-gender relations in modern capitalism, feminists have challenged the way we see our identities and experience our bodies, the way we organise work and child care, and the way we express love and develop thoughts. In other words, they have challenged the basic components of hierarchy to create a vision of society in which sexual difference does not imply subordination and oppression.

Just as the abolition of class power would release people outside the working class and thus requires their support and involvement, so the movement against hierarchy which is carried in feminism goes beyond the liberation of a sex. It contains the possibility of equal relations not only between women and men, but also between men and men, and women and women, and even between adults and children.

1. For critical accounts of how the word 'patriarchy' has been used: Paul Atkinson, The Problem with Patriarchy, *Achilles Heel* 2, 1979. Zillah Eisenstein and Heidi Hartman, *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, ed. Eisenstein, Monthly Review 1978. Linda Gordon and Allen Hunter, Sexual Politics and the New Right, *Radical America*, Nov 1977, Feb 1978. Olivia Harris and Kate Young, The Subordination of Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective, *Patriarchy Papers*. Roisin McDonough and Rachel Harrison, Patriarchy and Relations of Production, *Feminism and Materialism*, ed. Kuhn and Wolfe, Routledge 1978. Gayle Rubin, The Traffic in Women, *Towards an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna Reiter, Monthly Review 1975. Veronica Beechey, On Patriarchy, *Feminist Review* 3, 1979.

2 & 3. See *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism.*

SOMETHING YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT

The pressures of modern life tend to distract our attention from fundamental realities. There is a spiritual basis to life which many of us are now ignoring at the cost of our happiness and security. There are some eternal verities behind the teachings of all religions. In your own interest, learn something about these from THEOSOPHY, the Ageless Wisdom Religion.

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POVERTY
Simon Crine

Hidden army of workers need employee status

Packing Christmas cards at home

MRS HUNT STARTED WORKING at home six years ago, just after the birth of her first and only child. He is now old enough to go to nursery school, but there are no facilities in the nearby villages and anyway the bus services are infrequent. Her job is to package Christmas cards individually for a well-known local company. Each plastic packet has to have a card, an envelope, a greetings slip and then be sealed with the appropriate price tag. Mrs Hunt earns £14.30 a week for a 30-hour week, which works out at 47½p per hour. In addition, she has to pay heating and lighting overheads – and provide storage space for the cards, at considerable inconvenience to her family.

In the absence of official investigations, impressionistic evidence such as that quoted by Peter Townsend in *Poverty in the UK* (NS 26 October 1979) suggests rates of pay for other homeworkers may be even lower. Piece-rates are set far too high and extra costs are excluded by the employers. What little control the small employer loses by using homeworkers, he more than makes up by savings on overheads, administration, PAYE and National Insurance – not to mention the cheapness of the labour. A small survey carried out by the Low Pay Unit early this year discovered that nearly two-thirds of the interviewees collected less than 60p per hour.

The vast majority of the 150,000 low-paid workers in Townsend's major survey were women trapped in the home. Most were young mothers who could not go out to work for lack of adequate social provisions for their children. The disabled and the old pushed up the figures. In most cases, homeworking is vital to the family budget and often the only thing that keeps the family above the poverty line. The money is particularly useful for getting over the humps of family spending: new shoes for the kids, a winter's coat, an electricity bill at Christmas.

Perhaps the single most worrying aspect of homeworking today is its prevalence in the immigrant communities, particularly garment manufacturing among the Asians and Cypriots, where once it was the Jewish community. Homeworking is often organised within the family: the men tend to be the employers and the women the employees. Religion and cultural barriers make it difficult or impossible for women to leave home to work. Language and kinship serve to keep homeworking hidden, and make it even harder for workers to get organised.

Other sections of the female workforce have achieved (since the early 1970s) some public recognition of the disadvantages they suffer, but homeworkers are still not taken seriously. There are no big battalions on the home front to defend their interests and if, in true Smilesian fashion, homeworkers attempt to improve their pay by such draconian means as criticising their rates of pay, or by joining a trade union, they face summary and irrevocable dismissal. Because it is assumed that homeworkers are self-employed unless proven otherwise, they have few hopes of redress under legislation built to protect those who are clearly employed. Their pulling power is not such that they can rely on the forces of the market for protection: the supply of homeworkers appears far to exceed the demand. Homeworkers' isolation from each other, their ties in the home and, even occasionally, their own anti-union feeling, make trade unions' involvement very difficult. The unions themselves suffer from a lack of financial and physical resources to organise such workers even if they wanted to, and their bargaining power is minimal given homeworkers' weak legal position.

For years the trade unions' attitude to homeworking has been somewhat ambiguous. Concern has been voiced from time to time, but the prevalent feeling has ranged from disinterest to outright hostility. Many have argued that the very existence of homeworkers serves only to cut wages and even jobs in the factory. More cynically, male-dominated trade unions saw homeworking as the wife's work and therefore not vital to winning the family's bread, rather like the view which holds that cooking meals and cleaning rooms is not real work at all. Recently, however, the unions' attitudes have begun to change. Last year's TUC statement, swiftly adopted as official policy, takes a critical stance towards homeworking in the longer term, but argues for a positive, realistic one now. In a time of unemployment, with a government which appears to value a woman's place in the home, homeworking can only increase. If homeworkers do not have the safeguards other workers have, then they will be bound to be turned to by unscrupulous employers who care little for unionised labour. The unions' attitude now is that homeworkers should have the same legal rights as other workers, and that they, the unions, can help by extending collective bargaining to homeworkers. It will be easy enough in the years ahead for the unions to forget their pledge to homeworkers as they defend employment rights which have only recently been won, especially for women. Yet homeworkers, like part-time workers, are predominantly female and open to exploitation. To abandon them would be to undermine the bargaining strength of all women.

The first Bill to give homeworkers the same employment status and rights as all other workers came before Parliament earlier this year, but then only as a Private Member's Bill. By the time the Labour government fell, the case for this simplest of reforms was accepted and civil servants had begun work on their own draft of the legislation. But it was not considered worthy of inclusion in Labour's election manifesto and it is scarcely the sort of issue the Conservatives can be expected to embrace.

Only by achieving employee status can homeworkers enjoy rights other workers take for granted – such as maternity pay and leave, holiday and sick pay, and redundancy notice and pay. More important still, the structural problem of low pay cannot be tackled while the lowest paid workers of all can lose their jobs as soon as they voice any criticism about their terms or conditions.

The Hidden Army, by Simon Crine, is published this week; 90p from the Low Pay Unit, 9 Poland Street, London W1.

FREE SPEECH

AT THIS WEEK'S annual meeting of Lucas Industries, chairman Sir Bernard Scott (pay £958 a week) told shareholders that the trade unions risked being identified as a regressive, rather than a progressive force in British industry. This interested me because Lucas Industries has for the last five or so years been waging a battle against some of the most progressive forces in British trades unionism.

In 1974, the Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards Combine Committee, worried by continuing redundancies, concerned that their livelihoods seemed to rely on uncertain and unattractive military spending, and anxious that they should be prepared for the future, started work on their own corporate plan for the company. When produced, the 1,000 page document showed some of the alternative products that Lucas workers could make with their skills.

This, you might think, was a good example of progressive ideas among trades unionists. Here were workers anxious not to be forced into a hopeless defence of their jobs when military orders disappeared; here were workers seriously concerned about their company's products and its future, rather than just the narrow question of more wages. Lucas's response to this initiative was, however, distinctly cool.

Indeed, it took some time in coming and when it did, it was a mixture of indifference and hostility, which for the last two years has involved several commando raids on some of the leading workers behind the plan. Last year Lucas threatened one of them, Mike Cooley, with the sack if he continued his work on the plan which, according to the management's figures, took up four and a half days a month of unpaid leave. More recently they threatened to sack product engineer Ernie Scarbrow for refusing the offer of a supervisory job in their Willesden factory when his old job was moved elsewhere. After considerable pressure from workers in other Lucas plants, this threat has now been withdrawn, but not before one of Sir Bernard's local managers referred to Mr Scarbrow as Lucas's own version of 'Red Robbo'.

Sir Bernard's remarks about the unions are closely connected with something else he said at the annual meeting: 'Surely wages and salaries are already taking a big enough slice of the cake.' In Sir Bernard's company this (including all non-wage benefits) comes to 80 per cent – somewhat below the national average. The Lucas aerospace workers are aware of that, and it does not interest them much because they are concerned that the employees of the company should exercise some control over the use of the £90 million or so which Lucas has available each year for investment. It is this challenge which neither Sir Bernard nor any other managers – including those at the Post Office (see page 965) – can bear.

Christopher Hird

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SOUTHEAST ASIA
Peter Tatchell

Papua New Guinea bows to Jakarta's pressure over refugees

Indonesia's imperial ambitions

A REPORT RECEIVED in London earlier this month from mission stations in the Kamberatoro area of Papua New Guinea reveals the alarming extent to which the PNG government is complying with Indonesian requests for the return of refugees. They are fleeing from Indonesia's renewed bombing raids against the nationalist guerrillas of the Operasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement), in Indonesia-controlled West Irian. According to the report, the PNG authorities are refusing the refugees political asylum, and denying them food or medical assistance. As a result, many refugees are said to be dying of starvation. The Acting District Commissioner for the region is quoted as having ordered that 'refugees be given no food or medical help. Let the buggers die. They are to be sent back.'

The same source also alleges that it is PNG policy to give the refugees two options. Either they must return voluntarily on foot the way they came, or be sent back by force – often by sea to Jayapura, the West Irian provincial capital. One group of 700 refugees, who were forcibly escorted back despite their pleas for political asylum, was seen to flee into the jungle in terror at the sight of a heavily armed Indonesian patrol waiting to meet them at the border. The mission report cites examples of returning refugees being forced to dig their own graves and being shot into them. Others are said to have been tied up in weighted copra bags and dumped overboard at sea to drown.

This latest disclosure confirms earlier allegations that the PNG government has for years been secretly and forcibly repatriating thousands of refugees. Over 1,000 refugees who fled from reprisals following mass protests against the Indonesian-imposed elections in West Irian were said to have been sent back in May 1977. The fate of those repatriated is uncertain; though it is claimed that 200 refugees who returned from PNG last year were executed in Merauke Prison.

More recently, new evidence has come to light from an airline employee entrusted with the task of flying refugees back to West Irian. He is convinced that many of them are killed on their return. He alleges that his plane was met at the airport by armed Indonesian soldiers who marched the returnees into fields behind the aircraft hangars. Shortly afterwards he heard repeated automatic weapon fire, and the troops returned alone.

Similar reports have provoked Robert Sampatkuman of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to state that the lives of many refugees would be in danger if they were sent back. Despite this warning, the PNG authorities recently repatriated another 100 exiles recognised as legitimate refugees by the UN.

The PNG government's handling of the refugee issue has brought into question its resolve to resist Indonesian pressures. Its acquiescent policy towards Jakarta could have more sinister implications given the revelation of an alleged top secret Indonesian Department of Defence and Security document. Code-named 'Operation Bird of Paradise', it outlines a plan for the subversion of PNG.

Jakarta has been frustrated in its attempts to crush the nationalist movement in its territory of West Irian which shares a common frontier with PNG. Seeking independence from Indonesia and the establishment of a sovereign state of West Papua, the OPM has waged a nine-year hit-and-run guerrilla war. This has cost the Indonesians dearly in terms of troop deployments and casualties, and the loss of substantial revenues due to rebel sabotage of the immensely profitable American-financed oil and mineral industry. Jakarta's efforts to destroy the OPM are impeded by the setting up of guerrilla bases across the border in PNG.

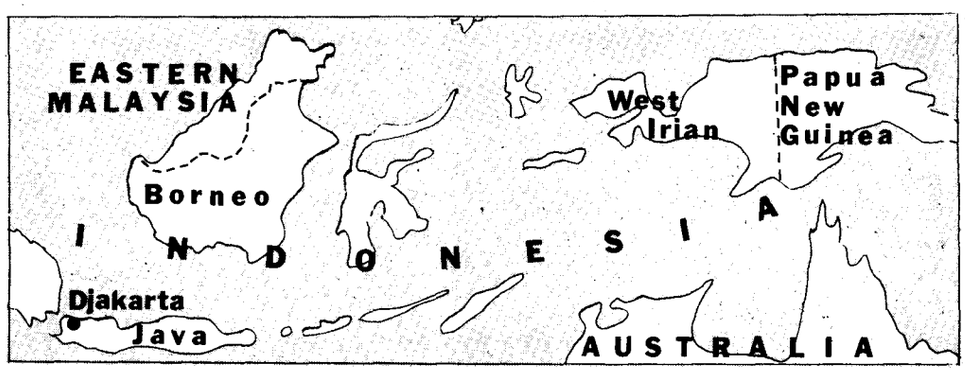
The 'Operation Bird of Paradise' document ominously draws parallels with the situation that existed in East Timor prior to Indonesian annexation. It stresses that the 'instability' in West Irian and Papua New Guinea threatens the security of Indonesia and invites foreign intervention. The document proposes an operational plan 'co-ordinated by commanders with social, political, economic, and military support'. The first phase of the plan, from 1975-79, is geared to creating popular support in PNG for integration with Indonesia. Intelligence agents are to be infiltrated into PNG to foster pro-Indonesian public opinion. The main targets of this operation are 'village people, high school and university students, and local political party members'. The objective is to create 'leaders of the people, who in the future will form groups and a political power that is oriented towards Indonesia'. The plan sets aside 'special funds' to bribe key officials in PNG. The aim of the second phase, from 1979-83, is to achieve 'the integration of the entire territory of PNG into Indonesia'. This requires the establishment of a 'nation-wide PNG People's Movement demanding integration'.

Though the authenticity of the Indonesian document has not been decisively proven, recent events tend to confirm its credibility. According to Mr James Mopio, a PNG opposition MP, there is evidence that Jakarta's intelligence agents have already heavily infiltrated PNG. Last month, he cited several such cases, including that of four Indonesian operatives carrying huge sums of money in Australian dollars, who were arrested by police in Wewak. Jakarta's agents are thought to have been responsible for an arson attack on the PNG Finance Department in Port Moresby earlier this year. This led to speculation that 'Operation Bird of Paradise' had entered a phase of sabotage and terrorism with the aim of discrediting the West Papuan cause and of de-stabilising PNG to make it ripe for annexation.

Fearful of provoking a confrontation, the Port Moresby government has gone to extraordinary lengths to maintain favour with Jakarta. This has led to accusations of collaboration and appeasement, and fears that Indonesia's plan to win over top government officials may be succeeding. The PNG authorities recently warned that events in West Irian would not be allowed to jeopardise good relations with Jakarta, and that people aiding the OPM would be prosecuted. Accordingly, the West Irian exile community has been subject to surveillence and harassment by the PNG security service.

Over the last couple of years, the PNG government has enthusiastically expanded its ties with Jakarta. At the signing ceremony of a Joint Technical Co-operation Treaty in June this year, the Indonesian Minister, Mr Maraden Panggabean, called for 'closer ties' and 'greater co-operation' between the two countries. Once one of PNG's fiercest critics of the Jakarta regime, the Opposition Leader, Mr Iambakey Okuk, has now become its staunchest ally. During a meeting with President Suharto in mid-1979, he urged Indonesia to invest in the development of PNG's huge oil and mineral reserves, and in return, he offered Jakarta vast tracts of land for agricultural projects. Most alarming of all was the recent call by another prominent opposition MP, Ms Josephine Abaijah, for PNG to join Indonesia to form 'one united country' in a 'Federation of Greater Indonesia'.

Terrified of creating an incident which could be used as a pretext for an Indonesian invasion, the PNG government has turned a blind eye while Jakarta's airforce bombs OPM targets inside PNG, and while Indonesian troops cross the border in hot pursuit of guerrillas. These cross-border raids have included the killing and wounding of Holomba villagers, and the destruction of their houses and food gardens. The newly signed border agreement between Port Moresby and Jakarta formalises these hot pursuit raids. It makes it obligatory for both parties to take 'tough new measures' and 'joint action' against 'anti-government activity' in the border area. Already there have been several joint Indonesian-PNG military operations against the OPM. Those suspicious of Jakarta's intentions see the new border agreement as part of a wider plan to soften up the frontier region and regularise the presence of Indonesian soldiers inside PNG as a prelude to more ominous military adventures.



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London Diary

☐ On the first day of Christmas (oh all right, last Wednesday) I went to Horseferry Road Magistrates Court to see British justice put through its paces. The case at issue was Regina – no stranger to British courtrooms – versus Dr Aziz Elazmeh and Ms Kasturi Sen. Dr Elazmeh is a lecturer at Exeter University and a leading scholar of Arabic history; Ms Sen works for the Catholic Institute for International Relations, and specialises in social policy and planning in developing countries. At 1 am on 3 February this year they left a dinner party in Rutland Gate. Dr Elazmeh went back to the house to collect a scarf he had left behind, while Ms Sen waited for a taxi. When Dr Elazmeh returned to Ms Sen a few minutes later, he found her being 'escorted' by two policemen. He asked them what they were up to; according to his testimony, he received in reply a punch in the stomach, following which he was bent backwards over a car bonnet and punched again. Sen and Elazmeh were then bundled off to Gerald Road police station, where, according to their evidence, they were repeatedly abused and assaulted before being put in the cells. The following morning *they* were charged with assaulting and obstructing the police and using threatening and insulting words. The evidence to support these charges was remarkable. PC Christopher Ansell, a 16½ stone hulk, said in court that he required the assistance of another police officer to control Ms Sen, who weighs 6½ stone. PC Michael Barnard claimed that Ms Sen had called him a 'white prick' and 'white trash'. This was rather surprising in the light of evidence given by many white character witnesses who had known her for some years – including Giles Radice MP, who said that she had become 'more or less a member of my family'. In fact the police evidence was riddled with inconsistencies – asked to explain why he had accosted Ms Sen in the first place, PC Barnard said he 'did not suspect drugs or try to search for them'; five minutes later he added, 'I suspected she may have had drugs on her.' Having been presented with such garbled evidence the magistrate decided to acquit on the assault charges – but, amazingly, convicted Ms Sen of insulting behaviour and Dr El Azmeh of obstructing the police. This is what is meant by even-handed justice.

☐ The point of this is to show that you do not necessarily strengthen law and order by expanding the police force, since in many cases it is the police themselves who cause 'crime'. If Kasturi Sen and Aziz Elazmeh had been left in peace on 3 February, they would have caught a taxi and gone home. The police didn't give any particular reason for their decision to stop Ms Sen but the upshot of this casual encounter was that two citizens of previously unblemished reputation have had their lives thoroughly disrupted for the best part of a year. And the charges on which they were convicted arose only because of the fracas with the constabulary. With each new case of police misbehaviour another few people are alienated from the police – *vide* the reaction of ordinary Merseysiders to the Jimmy Kelly affair – yet spokesmen such as James Anderton, chief constable of Manchester, persist in claiming that there is no problem. I think often of the case in 1833 when a policeman was stabbed to death at a meeting of the National Union of Working Classes and a coroner's jury returned a verdict of justifiable homicide. In those early days workers saw the police as the masters of society, rather than its servants, and I fear that the same is true today.

☐ A word of warning. I'm sorry to say that a rather unpleasant outfit managed to burrow its way into the 'Political Publications' ads on the back page of last week's NS. Something called the Wessex Study Group advertised the appearance of its 'new booklet' on *Our Trade Unions*, and readers were invited to send 50p to a London box number in order to secure a copy. Our advertising people (an admirable bunch) do their best to check the bona fides of advertisers, but I regret to say that this one slipped through. The Wessex Study Group is an organisation of the loony right (they advertise in the Nazi newspaper *British Patriot*) and features such unattractive characters as Denis Pirie, a veteran fascist who first attracted attention by his involvement in the National Socialist Movement in the early Sixties. To give you some idea of their general bearing, I quote a passage from an earlier publication of theirs, *Race and Immigration*:

> Q. Do immigrants create a housing shortage?
> A. Yes they do. Firstly because of their high birth rate, they need progressively more housing; and secondly because they commandeer whole chunks of towns and cities, turning them into ghettos. British people refuse to live in these areas through risk to life and limb. It stands to reason that if the four million (*sic*) immigrants left then approximately one million dwellings would become available.

The pamphlet adds that 'we have no objections to black doctors in this country if they are only here on a temporary training basis.' Jolly nice of them, I'm sure.

☐ While on the subject of the NS, let me say (after entering the usual caveat that this column does not print plugs) that anyone who wishes to understand the size and scope of the problems which Zimbabwe will face after proper independence could do no better than read Christopher Hitchens's new pamphlet for the Minority Rights Group, entitled *Inequalities in Zimbabwe* (75p from all good bookshops). And anyone who admires the drawings of our talented young cartoonist John Minnion could do worse than to head for the art gallery in central Milton Keynes, where his work is on display together with cartoons by Gerald Scarfe, Posy Simmonds, Trog, Garland, Calman, Frank Dickens and Mahood. End of announcement.

☐ Come February, a firm by the name of Gifford, Jeger, Weeks Ltd will set up shop in Bloomsbury. Behind these names are Mr Andrew Gifford, currently political assistant to Liberal leader David Steel; Ms Jenny Jeger, who performs the same function for Jim Callaghan; and Mr Wilf Weeks, ditto for Ted Heath. The three of them are leaving their jobs simultaneously to start this new venture, which will act as a 'parliamentary consultancy'. When I asked what gave her the idea, Jenny Jeger put it simply: 'We're on the receiving end of a lot of lobbying and we all know how much better it could be done.' But they won't, apparently, be indulging in the flashy, junket-ridden form of lobbying popularised by Bristol Channel Ship Repairers a few years ago in their battle against nationalisation. 'We're setting out to be as un-PRish as possible,' says Jenny Jeger. 'What we want to do is help industry communicate their needs with Parliament when it comes to drawing up legislation. Some firms have their own people but they're usually of one party or none. We can offer all-round coverage.' I can't imagine why but, coming as it does only weeks after Roy Jenkins's speech, I find this all faintly disturbing.

☐ After visiting the Milton Keynes exhibition last Saturday, I went on to the annual Christmas concert given by Cleo Laine and Johnny Dankworth at their converted stables in Wavendon, just down the road. This extraordinarily talented couple have created a sort of musical paradise at Wavendon: partly through the wonderfully intimate atmosphere of the stables as a concert setting; and partly through their Wavendon Allmusic Plan (horrid name, but a great scheme). WAP, as it's known, began ten years ago, and its aim is to create 'a scene of musical activity where all who want to do so can both create and appreciate all kinds of music'. Their success in this was shown on Saturday by the appearance of a series of young musicians who had 'been through' the scheme; best of all was a singing group called Modesty, which consists of three schoolgirls from South London who are, quite simply, sensational. If you have a spare moment over the festive season you should try to watch them on Johnny and Cleo's Christmas TV show. And if you're ever in the vicinity of Wavendon (where there are concerts of some sort most evenings) drop in and see what fun music-making can be.

☐ What a year for scandals! The spirit of 1963 fills every front page. Thorpe and Blunt were quite enough to be going on with, but now Young Winston tells us that he has dallied with Soraya Keeler (sorry, Khashoggi). All we need now is someone to play the part of Captain Ivanov, the hapless fellow from the Russian Embassy who, you may remember, used to pop out of Christine Keeler's back door while Profumo strode in through the front. Doubtless you can all think of suitable candidates. I gather that John Le Carré is now telling friends that the character of Bill Haydon was based not, as is popularly supposed, on Philby but on Blunt; but I can only assume that this is one of Le Carré's little jokes. Who's behind it all? I turn to Book 3 of *Gulliver's Travels* for guidance:

> I told him that in the kingdom of Tribnia, by the natives called Langden, where I had long sojourned, the bulk of the people consisted wholly of discoverers, witnesses, informers, accusers, prosecutors, evidences, swearers, together with their several subservient and subaltern instruments, all under the colours, the conduct, and pay of ministers and their deputies. The plots in that Kingdom are usually the workmanship of those persons who desire . . . to stifle or divert general discontents.

Quite so, I need hardly add that Tribnia and Langden are, respectively, anagrams of Britain and England.

Francis Wheen

A special edition of This England appears on pp. 989 & 990; an even more special edition of letters will appear in the next issue.

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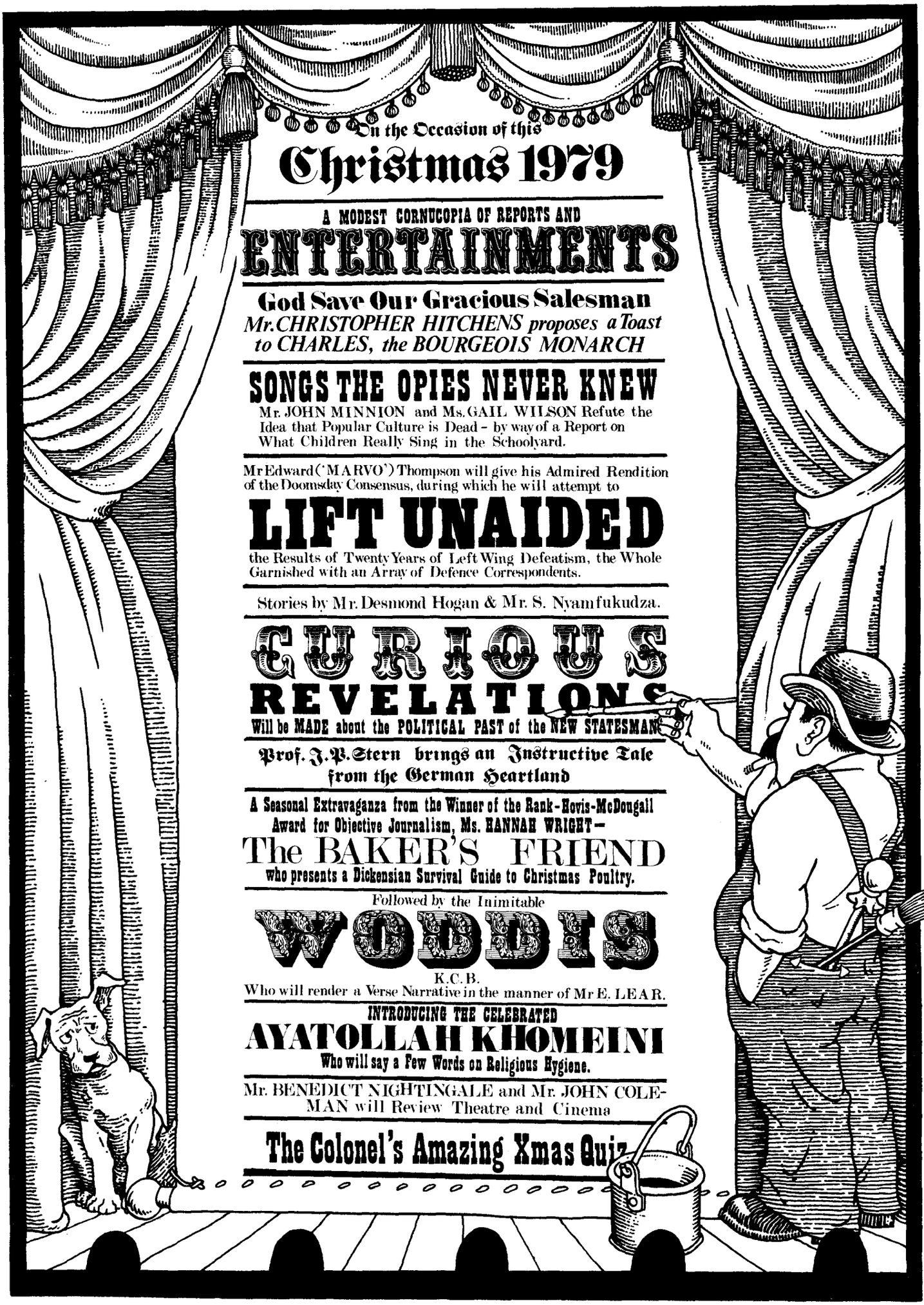
On the Occasion of this
Christmas 1979
A MODEST CORNUCOPIA OF REPORTS AND
ENTERTAINMENTS
God Save Our Gracious Salesman
Mr. CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS proposes a Toast
to CHARLES, the BOURGEOIS MONARCH
SONGS THE OPIES NEVER KNEW
Mr. JOHN MINNION and Ms. GAIL WILSON Refute the Idea that Popular Culture is Dead – by way of a Report on What Children Really Sing in the Schoolyard.
Mr Edward ('MARVO') Thompson will give his Admired Rendition of the Doomsday Consensus, during which he will attempt to
LIFT UNAIDED
the Results of Twenty Years of Left Wing Defeatism, the Whole Garnished with an Array of Defence Correspondents.
Stories by Mr. Desmond Hogan & Mr. S. Nyamfukudza.
CURIOUS
REVELATIONS
Will be MADE about the POLITICAL PAST of the NEW STATESMAN
Prof. J.P. Stern brings an Instructive Tale
from the German Heartland
A Seasonal Extravaganza from the Winner of the Rank-Hovis-McDougall Award for Objective Journalism, Ms. HANNAH WRIGHT –
The BAKER'S FRIEND
who presents a Dickensian Survival Guide to Christmas Poultry.
Followed by the Inimitable
WODDIS
K.C.B.
Who will render a Verse Narrative in the manner of Mr E. LEAR.
INTRODUCING THE CELEBRATED
AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI
Who will say a Few Words on Religious Hygiene.
Mr. BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE and Mr. JOHN COLEMAN will Review Theatre and Cinema
The Colonel's Amazing Xmas Quiz

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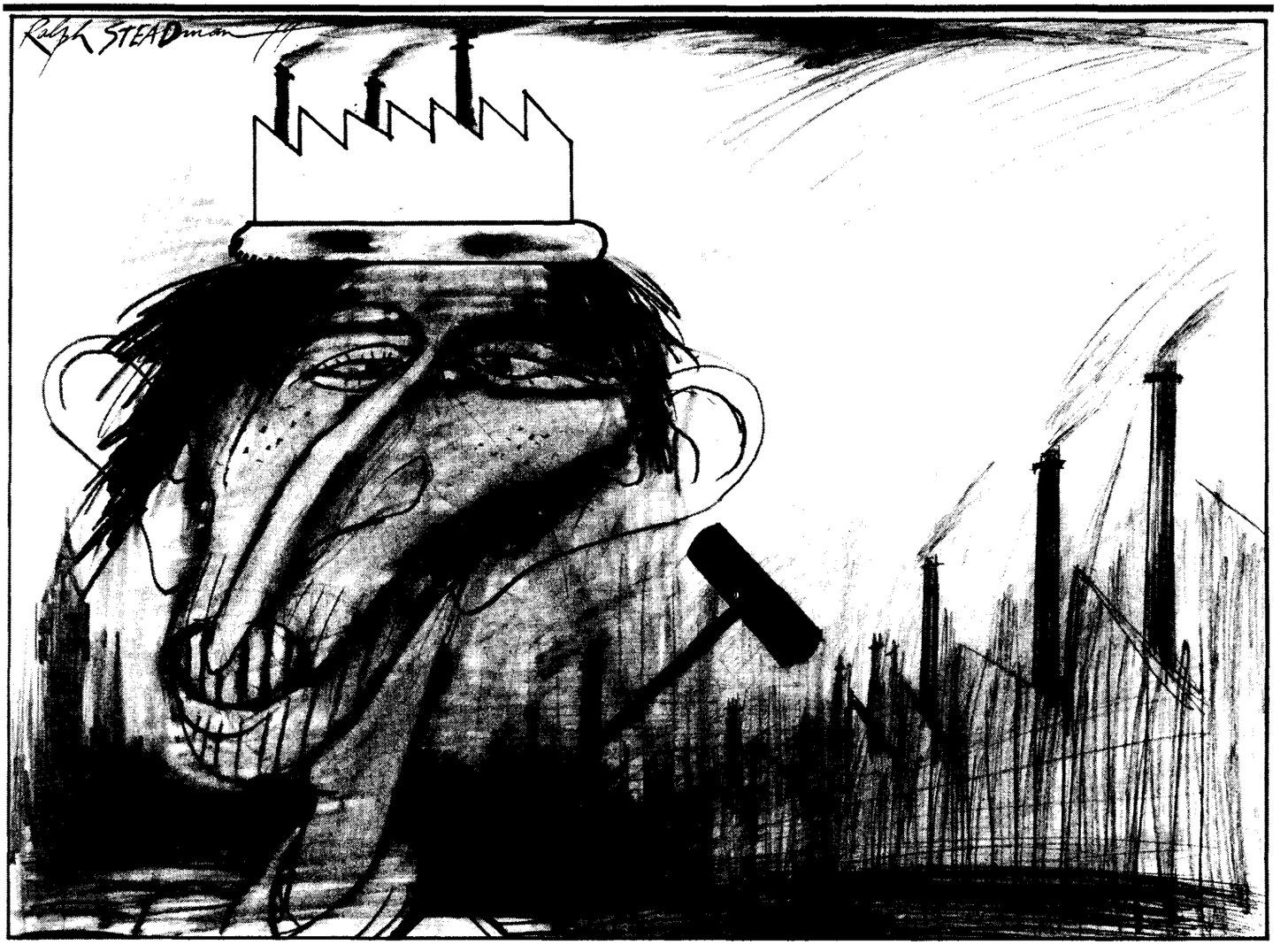
A man born to be . . .



CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS on the development of the commercial *monarchy*.

THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY is a rather uninspiring and dowdy crew of people; indeed its general dullness is part of the protective colouring which has helped it to avoid being identified with the last quarter-century of national decline. There are four living ex-Prime Ministers to whom nobody really gives the time of day, and a bevy of leaders and institutions publicly discredited and exposed. Yet the monarchy seems to most people a thing apart from civil society, which is probably why it is almost the last surviving specimen of its kind.

How much longer can this go on? In the case of the present Queen, the great thing has been continuity. She is the last of the imperial British monarchs, and provides a link with an age slightly more confident than our own. After all, as the NEW STATESMAN put it shortly before the Jubilee:

> In 1952, the Tories had just got back to office after the Attlee years; Churchill had made his famous address to Congress, Monty was at NATO HQ, Stalin ruled Russia, Chiang's men were fighting a rearguard action against the Chinese Communists on the Burma frontier. Virtually the whole of Africa was still partitioned among the colonial powers, and the British authorities had just informed the UN that they did not see their way to abolishing flogging in the mandated territories.

How different, how very different . . . At this moment, it is the full-time job of a large number of courtiers to groom a successor to Elizabeth II; a successor more suited to the sleazy, corrupt, confined and corporate society we have become, or to 'the exciting challenge of the last quarter of the twentieth century', as they would and do put it.

Anthony Holden was granted a fairly close look at the young king in the making, and My Lord Weidenfeld of Chelsea makes an ideal publisher for the result (*Charles Prince of Wales*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson £6.95). The lineaments of the new-style monarchy start to become apparent very early on:

> Royal links with industry, for instance, are traditional. The Queen's Awards for Export are only the most familiar of a number of devices of moral encouragement . . . In his early thirties, Prince Charles has begun to extend those links into the virgin royal territory of the trade unions, as befits the times; in 1979 he attended the annual conference of the Iron and Steel Trades Federation, carefully selected as one of the few unions which had then submitted to the Callaghan Government's pay policy.

Above politics, too, don't you see. And a slight change of tempo from the boring harangues about 'getting your finger out' from his wholly unacceptable father.

Selected sweetheart trade unions apart, the Prince is not lost for contacts in the boardroom either. His choice of entourage reflects this imperative. Holden tells us that:

> Perhaps the most significant appointment, however, was that in 1978 of a thirty-five-year-old diplomat, Oliver Everett, to be assistant private secretary. Everett's bird-like appearance belies his athletic prowess, notably as a polo-player of even more accomplishment than his master [there's glory for you]; more important, he has organised such initiatives as the Prince of Wales's tour of British industry under the auspices of the National Economic Development Office.

In the same spirit of buccaneering enterprise, the Prince leases his rich oyster-beds on the River Helston in Cornwall to Mac Fisheries Ltd, who thereby subcontract and market about a million oysters a year. This decision shows his up-to-dateness in the matter of his Cornish dukedom – his right to a tithe of 300 puffins from the Isles of Scilly would look foolishly behind the times if exercised.

Towards his Welsh subjects the Prince is hardly less generous and go-ahead. We learn that:

> Visiting Expo '70 in Tokyo, he met the president of the Sony electronics conglomerate, and learned of their plans to build a plant somewhere in Western Europe. 'Why not try Wales?' suggested its Prince, less than a year after his investiture at Caernarvon. Two years later, Prince

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> Charles was able to open the new Sony plant in Bridgend, Glamorgan ...

Where they could certainly do with the work. At home, abroad, there is the same unsleeping salesmanship – the head of PR for Great Britain Incorporated. South America? No problem:

> By fortunate timing, his presence in Brazil coincided with the finalisation of a huge investment by British banks in a steel-mill complex near Rio, expected to yield a profit of some £11 million. A little delicate blurring at the edges, and the Prince could be said to have 'clinched' the deal. As his ten day trip had cost the British taxpayer some £11,000, it showed an equally neat 1,000-1 return on investment.

And no doubt a vote of thanks from the board of GB Inc, who can't afford to pass up any *coups* however small.

NOT THAT Prince Charles is indifferent to the greater issues. We are assured that while in Brazil he expressed a private desire to be informed about the human rights situation. His personal library and reading habits are also scrutinised by Holden, who reveals that 'E. F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* is something of a bible, but he will fall asleep over a novel'. (This last, even though 'anything by Alexander Solzhenitsyn' is considered absorbing. One imagines him ordering his Solzhenitsyn by the yard, though it's difficult to picture him asking the bookseller to leave the soporific old novels out.)

So it is hardly a surprise to discover that 'his religious convictions were first encouraged by the Rt Rev Robert Woods, when Dean of Windsor and Chaplain to the Queen. Now Bishop of Worcester, Woods is gratified to find the Prince 'unassailed by doubts.' Not bad for a boy of more than thirty years of age. But of course, this must not be allowed to degenerate into mere blandness. There are twentieth century challenges out there just waiting to be met. 'As the future head of the Anglican Church he is anxious to use his position to encourage *rapprochement* with Rome.' Well, he would, wouldn't he? Anything else would look hidebound and, well, traditional.

Even more indicative of the new-style bourgeois monarchy is the retinue of private secretaries as described here. First there was Squadron Leader David Checketts, written up in true Seventies style as 'an urbane, grammar-school educated public relations man with a distinguished RAF record'. When he was felt to be too old and conventional for the growing boy, he 'returned to more lucrative full-time public relations work'. His replacement, the Hon. Edward Adeane, is a man much in tune with the times:

> To work for the Prince, he gave up a lucrative [that word again] practice as a libel barrister, with such disparate clients as Lady Falkender and the Tory Party, *The Times* and *Playboy* magazine.

Adeane went to Eton and Cambridge all right, but there is nothing fuddy-duddy about *him*. Any more than there is about the Hon. John Baring, chairman of the merchant bank, who looks after the new and dynamic financing of the Duchy of Cornwall. Hardly perceptible, but definite after a second and third glance, here is the gradual process by which the monarchy is being steered into the post-imperial age. Even the royal choice of friends and companions has to be trimmed. The Nicholas Soames lot, for instance, are written off as 'upper-class twits'. 'The Prince these days' says Holden, 'favours more substantial figures such as his barrister friend Richard Beckett, who serves on the committee of one of his trusts, and Hywel Jones, a socialist economist who shared his staircase at Cambridge.' A socialist, of course, among one's friends would be *de rigeur*. (Though Holden comments matter-of-factly that the royal parents have 'orthodox conservative attitudes' to which Charles 'reverted' after being talked out of joining the University Labour Club by none other than Lord Butler.)

Sometimes the description of his efforts with his 'circle' are downright laughable. Torn between his kinship with the well-born and his need to appear democratic and modern, Charles causes sentences like this to be written about him, and his chums the Tollemaches (Timothy and Alexandra):

> Though heir to the Tollemache and Cobbold brewery fortune, the fifth Baron has recently felt obliged to open Helmingham's gardens to the public.

There was none of that sort of foolishness when Edward was waiting to become king.

Then of course there is showbiz, an essential means of communicating with the aspirations of modern youth etc, and one which previous princes have properly scorned. Not so our boy, whose friend Norton Knatchbull (chip off the Mountbatten block) has occasionally persuaded him to wear promotional T-shirts from films he has worked on – notably *A Bridge Too Far*. His phrase for his better-favoured younger brother Andrew is 'the one with the Robert Redford looks'. He likes *The Goodies* and *Monty Python*, and still affects to find The Goons funny. In touch, in touch, always in touch. It must be hell, but it must be done.

To the Left, the monarchy has often seemed an irrelevant issue – either a tedious anomaly to be mocked or an occasional target for criticism concerning luxurious expense. This philistinism is a big mistake. First, the Palace still retains considerable political reserve influence, through the Royal Prerogative and through other influences more informal. We learn from Holden of a lunch where 'The Prince of Wales reckoned he got the better of the PM in one or two exchanges on the small print of Cabinet memoranda'. Oh he did did he? The Prime Minister was James Callaghan, so it probably wasn't difficult to win the argument. But the point is the access of the Royal Family to the secrets which the voters never know, and the resulting manoeuvrability which this confers on them.

At times, in the recent past, this has been important. We know how vital it was to Harold Wilson, in his disastrous foot-dragging over Rhodesia in 1965, to keep the confidence of the Palace at every step. We know how the Palace and the prerogative helped to foist Sir Alec Douglas-Home on the country as Prime Minister, and we know how nearly they foisted the Marquess of Salisbury (just imagine it) on us instead. True, many of these backstairs deals involve the Queen's staff of advisers and retainers, but their power, too, deserves to be reckoned with.

Then there is the ideological element. If nothing else, Jubilee year demonstrated to many radicals that the monarchy still has a vast claim on the popular imagination. It is, of course, only to be expected that the very apex of our system should be an absurdity – in historic terms, constitutional terms, or even showbiz ones. But it is a great mistake to underestimate its subliminal effect on the country, and on the formation of opinion.

It is in this dimension – the ideological one – that the re-shaping of the present Prince of Wales is taking place. His advisers know that the pomp and circumstance cannot be jettisoned – indeed, events like the Investiture show that they often feel it needs beefing up. But they also know that it will not do on its own; that the next monarch will have to make his way in the world and that his subjects will have to be conditioned for it. Through every page in Holden's book shines the fact that the Prince is short on intelligence, imagination or charm. Very well then, Prince of mediocrity.

The boy has been through every hoop that can be devised for him – and apparently has no doubts or complaints. He has piloted a plane and made a parachute jump. He has commanded a Royal Navy vessel though he has never (unlike his Uncle Dickie) heard a shot fired in anger. He has been around the world, and yet according to Holden *he was seized with jealousy while having dinner with Sir James Goldsmith.*

Perhaps this is what we have come to – a king in the making, programmed to respond to that kind of success, regretting its apparent decline in Britain and determined to do his bit. A king who knows a few social democrats by their christian names; a king who has more or less acceptable packages of opinion on everything from racial harmony to ecumenicism. A king fit to be on the board in his own right. A king in the image of Peter Jay; with relatives slightly better connected.

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Motley mishaps

There is one extremely important aspect of the last war that would appear to have been entirely overlooked and neglected by even the very best military historians. Thumb through the works of the greatly gifted Correlli Barnett, peruse the articles from the pen of the wholly admirable and delightful Michael Howard as one may, not a sign of the subject do we see and it is therefore left to me to raise the matter, an amateur historian if ever there was one and badly though what I have to say reflects on the government of the day. I am referring, of course, to the total absence, from 1940 onwards, of bananas.

By a process of reasoning that almost everybody can follow, no bananas means (and this would have been an ideal moment for employing the word 'ergo', if one were the kind of person who could at any point bear the word 'ergo') no banana skins. And no banana skins in our city roads and streets in the war years meant that there was nothing for old gentlemen to slip up on and measure their length and thus raise the spirits of any passing troops or civilians by giving them a hearty and valuable laugh. Laughs were then in very short supply and old gentlemen coming purlers would have pleased many and thereby shortened the war. How very short-sighted of the authorities not to have imported, instead of guns and ammunition and so on, crate after crate of the tasty fruit, with a request that, after use, the skins should be left lying out in the open. What a smack in the eye it would have been for old Hitler, eh what? What a morale-booster it could have furnished. I don't myself happen to find it amusing when poor old Mr Merryweather, hurrying to catch the 8.15, steps on a banana skin in Station Road and he and his bowler and gig-lamps and briefcase go flying in all directions, but then I have a strictly limited sense of humour which rigorously excludes any aspect, however piquant, of bananas.

I never, for example, know whether to laugh or cry in a theatre when things go badly wrong upon the stage. One is torn between hysteria and horror. Waste no sympathy, however, upon the players involved. Actors caught up in some grievous mishap are the first to start laughing and the last to stop and joyfully relate such misfortunes to each other down the years ('We were doing this Shaw thing at Nottingham, and . . .'). I have been present on a number of occasions in theatres when not everything went according to Cocker (1631-75, reputed author of a popular arithmetic book and taken as a standard of orthodoxy). I must, I suppose, have been about twelve when a touring company of *Lilac Time* came to Colchester, where I was staying with my charming Essex grandmother. In those days, *Lilac Time* burgeoned each Christmas, just like *Peter Pan*, and was a reputably musical musical based on the life of Franz Schubert. Seats were booked (dress circle, natch) and off we went, rather grandly chauffeur-driven in a car called a Crossley which lived up to its name and was a sulky brute to start, crank as the chauffeur might. Anyway and in due course, down we sat and up went the curtain for Act I which revealed a riot of improbable-looking lilac in 'The Courtyard of a Lodging House' with the entire company singing like billy-o. Act II found us in 'A Sitting-room in Christian Veit's House', vases of lilac everywhere and heaps more singing. In the interval before Act III, the iron safety curtain was lowered to calm us all and in conformity with the legal requirements but when the moment came for it to be raised, it stuck when it had risen a mere four feet from the ground and nothing and nobody could persuade it to rise another inch. The theatre manager announced, to loud applause, that the company was nevertheless prepared to press on with Act III ('The Prater' and, I don't doubt, swags of lilac everywhere) and so the remainder of the tender love story unfolded itself to us in the form of headless bodies, moving now here, now there and belonging one never knew to quite whom; apart from that of the heroine, Lili, who, determined that we should not miss her top notes, bent down and shrieked them at us from underneath the curtain. My dear and roly-poly grandmother, a great giggler, was in fits throughout but I remember feeling, rather priggishly, I shouldn't wonder, more distressed than diverted.

But one occasion I did rather enjoy, so unusual was it and involving as it did no embarrassed human beings. It took place during a provincial and pre-London tour of an extremely elaborate musical play based on a famous novel, with a cast of eighty and numerous scenes and sets. Early on in the entertainment, various ominous back-stage bangings and lighting imperfections and hitches and unexplained pauses and loud whisperings betrayed the fact that all was not entirely well. At one point, after we had been sitting quietly in darkness for some time, bright lights suddenly came on to reveal an almost empty stage onto which there shyly entered from the right a piece of scenery. I should like to say that it glided on, but to tell the truth, juddered on was what it did, propelled I suppose on some sort of trolley. It was quite a large piece of scenery and it showed us the side of a town house, with front door and window and steps and a small yew tree. It came to rest, in full view, and a respectful silence fell. We gazed politely at it, and it gazed right back at us. Was somebody going to come through the door or, even, clean the steps or prune the yew? Evidently not. The silence back stage was now complete and one felt that perhaps they had all gone out for a cup of tea or, perhaps, home. It is difficult to judge time accurately at such suspenseful moments but the piece of scenery (one cannot call anything so imposing 'a flat') must have been with us for a full two minutes, after which, obviously considering us a poor lot, it got on the move once more and creaked and juddered its way back into the wings, never to be seen again. The gallery, of course, cheered loudly. It was, heaven knows, their one chance.

There have been other memorable moments. I have been present when Edith Evans, half way through declaiming one of the late Queen Elizabeth's speeches, dried up completely and said, loudly and furiously and twice, '*What*?' to the indistinct prompter. Once in Lancashire, the male member of a pair of adagio dancers was so tipsy (we were enjoying an end-of-the-pier concert party) that his lady partner, held precariously aloft by him while she gracefully contorted, kept loudly and desperately hissing 'Put me down, you bloody fool!'. And I was once in Hamburg, at one of those operas that has a ballet inserted into it (can it have been *Faust*?), when one of the male dancers, gleefully hopping and kicking his legs up, sent one of his ballet shoes (those things that the more senior of us think of as 'pumps') flying vertically upwards until it was lost to view behind the proscenium arch. The *pensée* that 'what goes up must come down' was clearly visible on the faces of the other hoppers as they hopped on, and we all eagerly waited for the shoe to descend, but descend it never did. Got caught up somewhere, I suppose, though I dare say that our wartime bombs dislodged it satisfactorily. Older actors still speak of that remarkable moment when Mrs Patrick Campbell, touring in a play that required a snow scene (I think it may have been *Hannele*), purchased a newfangled German device that was said to provide the last word in artificial snow. She switched it on, all expectancy, on the first night and moved confidently stage centre, only to find herself being pelted with lumps of snow as large as cricket balls. She was to be seen, shrieking with laughter, fending off the missiles and shouting to the astonished audience 'And it cost me a *fortune*!'.

Sometimes a mishap occurs that requires the invention of extra dialogue to cover it, a particularly perilous undertaking when the play is very well known. In the early days of the open air theatre in Regent's Park, an actress friend of mine (let us call her Joyce) was appearing in a Shakespeare play. If the weather was inclement and the conditions windy, it was by no means easy for the performers to hear their cue and make their entrance, and one blustery evening Joyce was to be seen winding her way through shrubs and bushes and down a gravel path and then out onto the brightly lit raised lawn that served as a stage, only to find that she had arrived a whole scene too soon. Another actress already there, and legitimately, realised that Joyce must be got rid of as soon as possible and, summoning her most carrying tones, said loud and clear 'I have no business with thee. Go away!', a line that is not to be found in Shakespeare but which served to send Joyce hurrying back through the bushes, only to reappear once more shortly after when her actual cue came. 'Here she is again' said the audience to each other, much mystified by the elaborate comings and goings.

And sometimes, of course, disasters are purposely brought about. Some years ago, a now dead actress played Peter Pan and had contrived, foolishly as it turned out, to make herself very unpopular back stage (ceaseless pouts and complaints). Those responsible for flying her about decided to make life a little difficult for her and one evening in the Darlings' nursery, just when Peter was proudly demonstrating to Wendy his air-borne abilities and took off, making for the mantelpiece, he found that he had missed it by a foot or two and was scrabbling in a rather undignified manner up the wall.

Just think, we've been together now for four whole years. Thank you for your patience, and a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Roger Woddis

The bomb with a luminous nose

When awful darkness and silence reign
Over the great Bomboolian Plain,
  Through the finger-biting nights;
When the jolly Jingoes roar
At the thought of a lovely war;
  When storm-clouds cruise on the Pershing Heights,
And the Danes turn aside from Thor:

Then, through the doomy-gloomy dark,
In a graceful, parabolic arc,
  An object giving off strange rays
  Glides through the pymbly night,
  Far higher than a kite:
High over Europe the missile strays,
  In search of a likely site.

Slowly it passes – hovers – creeps,
While far below half Europe sleeps;
And as it on its journey goes,
Alarming both its friends and foes,
Dutchmen and Belgians seem to cower,
Neither of them a major power,
And cry, 'Where in hell did *that* come from?
    The Bomb! – the Bomb!
  The wandering Bomb over Europe goes!
    The Bomb! the Bomb!
  The Bomb with a luminous Nose!'

    Long years ago
  The Bomb nearly had its day,
Till it caught the eye of a Grumbly Girl,
  Who wanted to have her way,
For the Grumblies came in a sieve, they did,
Landing in May near the Flippery Lid,
    Where the Perky Pollsters grow,
  And their heads are made of hay.
And all the press and the media rang
With the Chorus they daily and nightly sang:
    'False and few, false and few,
    Are the reasons the Grumblies give:
    Their heads are gold, and their eyes are blue,
    And they keep their brains in a sieve.'

Terribly, terribly passed those days,
    While the awful Grumblies stayed:
  They danced in rings of Torydom
  To the dreadful power of the mighty Bomb,
    For that was good for trade.
And day and night it was always there
In the mind of the Grumbly Girl so rare,
With her steel-blue eyes, and her golden hair.
And the Grumblies growled, and they cried 'Beware'!
We shall be devoured by the Brezhny Bear!
We need to base the Bomb right here.
In Lakenheath and Oxfordshire.'
Ever keeping their watchful eyes on
The so-called threat on the far horizon,
The Grumbly Chorus, their voices shrill,
Sang of the joys of overkill:
    'False and few, false and few,
    Are the reasons the Grumblies give;
    Their heads are gold, and their eyes are blue,
    And they keep their brains in a sieve.'

But when the sun was low in the West,
  The Bomb arose and said:
'It's just as well they're all obsessed –
  They could have used salt instead.'
And since that day it cruises still,
By fjord and forest, lake and hill,
Singing – 'Despite what her friends maintain.
My Grumbly Girl is quite insane!
As long as they think she's just a bore,
They'll none of them know what lies in store!'

    O velvety fingers in iron gloves –
    This is the Grumbly Girl he loves!
    And because by night he could not see,
    He gathered the bark of the Tomahawk Tree
      On the panicky plain that grows.
      And he wove him a thunderous Nose,
    A Nose as loud as a Nose could be!
Of vast proportions and painted black,
And filled with death from the front to the back.
    In a sweetly smiling face it ended,
    With a luminous lamp within suspended,
      All most devout,
      With a deadly snout
      To prevent the world from throwing it out;
    And with flames all round to send the light
    In rays on its iron maiden flight.

And now each night, with much aplomb,
Blandly and grandly glides the Bomb;
And above the clamour of goats and geese
You may hear the squeak of the pipe of peace,
While ever he seeks, nor seeks in vain,
To meet with his Grumbly Girl again;
Lonely and wild – all night he goes,
The Bomb with a luminous Nose!
And all who watch at the midnight hour,
Hoping to see their children flower,
Cry, as they trace its terrible flight,
Moving along through the gathering night,
    'This is the hour when forth he goes,
    The Bomb with a luminous Nose!
    Yonder – over the world he goes;
      He glows!
      He glows!
    The Bomb with a luminous Nose!'

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FOLKLORE

Suzie, the highly inventive schoolgirl

by

Gail Wilson

Drawings by John Minnion

IT'S CONVENTIONAL to say that popular oral culture has been killed off by television and tabloid newspapers. It is, however, alive and well among London schoolchildren, if nowhere else – as the rhymes on these two pages show. They were collected from primary school children, mainly girls, nearly all less than eight years old. The quality is admittedly mixed, but even the most transient ones show an extraordinary verve and fascination with language.

The powerful concentration on death and sex is quite a long way from the world of John and Iona Opie's *Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*: indeed, the whole collection perhaps fits rather oddly with the standard 'little girl' image. The Opies, however, made it clear that they didn't much approve of 'rude' rhymes.

Parodies of commercial culture are obviously one major strand, together with developments of songs which are slight modifications of very old material. This one, which can be heard in many schools today, closely resembles one the Opies did record:

> My boy friend gave me an apple,
> My boy friend gave me a pear,
> My boy friend gave me a kiss on the lips,
> And threw me down the stair.
>
> I gave him back his apple,
> I gave him back his pear,
> I gave him back his kiss on the lips,
> And threw him down the stair.
>
> I really wanted the apple,
> I really wanted the pear,
> I really wanted the kiss on the lips,
> But I *didn't* want throwing down the stair.

On the other hand is a strictly topical joke, crude and not very memorable:

> Kermit the Frog
> Got a smack in the gob
> For messing about with Miss Piggy.
> They put it in once, they put it in twice,
> No wonder he's got a sore willy.

And of course, most of the rhymes are connected intimately with complex chanting and clapping games (perhaps sometimes with skipping) and vary quite strikingly between schools just a few miles apart. *When Suzie Was a Schoolgirl* is sung in one place as:

> Miss – Miss – I can't do this,
> I don't know where my pencil is

Just down the road, they sing the version in John Minnion's drawing.

Curiously, many teachers – and parents – are wholly unaware of the playground-song culture (indeed, some even deny its exist-

On top of old Smokey,
All covered in sand,
I shot my old teacher
With a big rubber band.
I shot her with pleasure,
I shot her with pride;
I couldn't have missed her—
She was forty foot wide.
I went to the funeral,
I jumped on her grave;
While others threw flowers
I threw a grenade.

We three kings of Orient are
One in a tractor, one in a car;
One in a scooter, beeping his hooter;
Following (someone's) car.

O, star of wonder, star of light,
(Someone) caught his pants alight.
Westward leading through the ceiling,
Guide us to the traffic light.

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, boom-zi-ay.
Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, boom-zi-ooh.
Boys've got the muscles, teachers got the brains,
Girls have got the sexy legs—

One, two, three, four,
Come on boys if you want to see more
Five, six, seven, eight,
Sorry boys, you're far too late.

I'm Shirley Temple, the girl with the curly hair
Got two dimples, wear my skirts up there.
I'm not able
To do the sexy cradle
But I'm Shirley Temple, the girl with the curly hair.

Salami, salami, do you know salami?
Hands up here —skirts up there
—Do you know salami?

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ence). Children are not on the whole secretive about their songs: like many other subcultures, they are perhaps more prepared to 'come out' than they used to be. There may be reluctance over some of the death songs, which can be stark indeed. Perhaps the ultimate is:

> If you look down when the hearse goes by
> You'll surely be the next to die.
> They'll wrap you up in a big white sheet,
> And throw you down about ninety feet,
> The worms crawl in and the worms crawl out;
> They come in thin and they go out stout.
> There's one little worm that's not too shy,
> He crawls in your ear and out of your eye.
> Then you turn a slimy green
> And pus comes out like shaving-cream.

So far, at least, there seems to be no influence from West Indian, Turkish or Greek children. The tradition remains firmly English, so long as English includes American. Real racism seems rare (the timeless 'Eeny meeny miney mo' now sometimes continues 'catch a *tigger* by the toe'. But that is very likely an adult suggestion).

The inventions may be short, simple and declamatory:

> Ice cream and jelly,
> A punch in the belly.
> You can't watch telly,
> – Your feet are too smelly.

Or they may be quite long and rhythymically intricate, with syncopated clapping-sequences that no-one much over six years old can hope to master:

> I . . . *went* to the Chinese restaurant,
> To buy a loaf of bread – bread — bread.
> They wrapped it up in a five-pound note,
> And this is what they said – said – said:
> My . . . name is
>
> Ell – I, ell-I,
> Chikolai, chikolai,
> Um-pum-pi-li
> Chinese chopstick
> Indian chief says
> – How!

Certain schools seem to specialise in parodies, and several others could have been collected from the school which produced the version of the *Tennessee Waltz* ('On top of Old Smokey . . .') which John Minnion has illustrated. Whether the authorship is by collective improvisation, individual composition, or some mixture of the two is something one cannot discover, any more than one can discover the true and original identity of 'Kilroy'.

And of course songs are continually altered by corruptions and changes in the language. Very possibly the 'Shirley Temple song' was built in the first place around some other heroine – the insertion from Thirties commercial culture being made, no doubt, well before most of the children who now sing it were born. It seems hard to believe that 'Salami, salami, do you know salami' is not a corruption for 'Salome'. But what was Salome doing there in the first place? Or, in another song

> I was going to the tacky,
> I was going to the fair,
> When I met a Cinderella
> With flowers in her hair . . .

'Cinderella', surely, was originally 'senorita'. But what was a 'tacky'? Readers who know the answers to this or other questions are welcome to enlighten us.

When Suzie was a baby, a baby Suzie was;
She went 'ga, ga, g'ga-ga-ga, ga ga-ga ga ga, ga ga.'

When Suzie was a toddler, a toddler Suzie was;
She went 'tod, tod, etc....

When Suzie was a schoolgirl, a schoolgirl Suzie was;
She went 'Miss, Miss! I wanna go piss,
I don't know where the toilet is!'

When Suzie was a teenager, a teenager Suzie was;
She went 'ooh, aah, I lost my bra,
I left my knickers in my boyfriend's car.'

When Suzie was a mother,
She went cook, cook, etc....

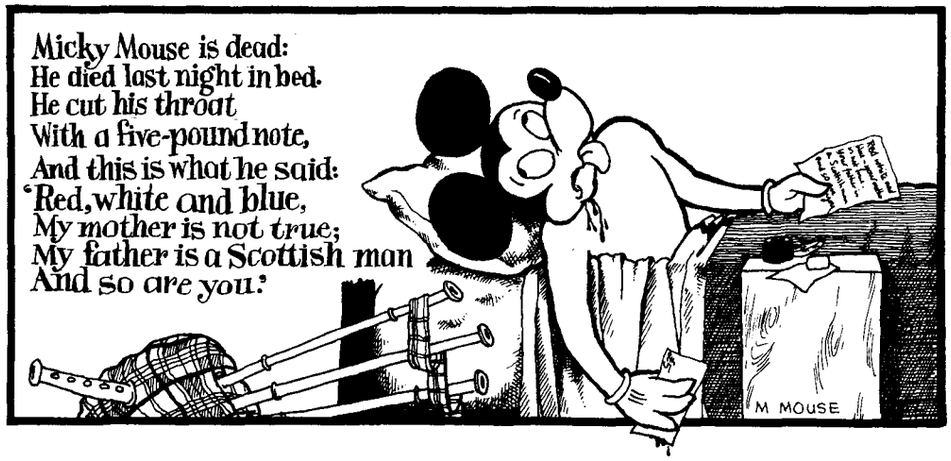
When Suzie was a granny,
She went knit, knit, etc....

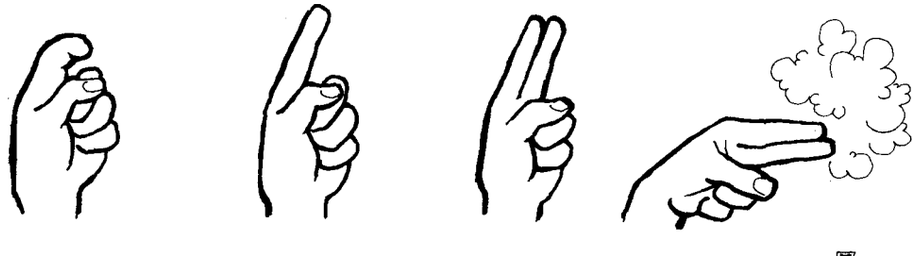
When Suzie was a-dying,
She went die, die, etc....

When Suzie was a skeleton,
She went clatter, clatter, etc...

When Suzie was a ghost,
She went 'whoo, whoo, etc....'

When Suzie was an angel,
She went flap, flap, etc...


Micky Mouse is dead:
He died last night in bed.
He cut his throat
With a five-pound note,
And this is what he said:
'Red, white and blue,
My mother is not true;
My father is a Scottish man
And so are you.'
M MOUSE



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An Alternative to Doomsday

EDWARD THOMPSON takes a combative, discursive tour through the looking-glass world of British defence ideology – including careful examination of certain battlegrounds too readily abandoned by the Left, and reconstructs the concept of an independent Europe. 'Greece and France have detached themselves from NATO, and the skies have not fallen. Yugoslavia has maintained its stubborn national integrity. Rumania has edged into a curious position of truculent dependence. Within NATO itself, second and third tiers are discernible – Norway, Denmark, Holland and Iceland, Portugal and (shortly) Spain . . . are refusing nuclear hardware. As a new neutralist heartland re-emerged in Europe, a hundred forms of political and cultural bonding would go on, not only between socialist and radical movements in West and South Europe, but also with the huge reserves of "dissidence" in East Europe'. Such a policy would be formidably risky, but 'we are already at risk – Britain, Europe, civilisation, the human project – whatever we wish to put upon it'.

I AM CONCERNED with the management of opinion. This has a long history. But the history which concerns me now is that which led up to Britain's zealous advocacy, at Brussels on 12 December, of the deployment of Cruise missiles on our own soil and on that of NATO allies.

We may commence in October 1979. On 6 October Brezhnev attempted to pre-empt NATO plans by announcing some limited and unilateral local withdrawal of his forces from East Germany. This was like a nuclear 'red alert' to the propaganda organs of NATO and the British State, whose operators – television 'experts', defence correspondents, editorialists – were 'scrambled' and instantly sent aloft upon their long-prepared offensive against the public mind.

We were informed that NATO was just on the point of deciding to deploy about 600 nuclear-tipped Cruise or Pershing-2 missiles upon nominated hosts within NATO: 108 Pershings and 464 Cruises (or Tomahawks) to be exact:

> Britain would take the largest number of Cruise missiles (160) followed by Italy (112), West Germany (96 plus the 108 Pershings), Holland (48), and Belgium (48). (*Guardian*, 14 November)

These figures, 'released in the Hague', might not be wholly acceptable to Holland, and even created a little concern in Belgium (we were informed in mid-October by a defence 'expert' on BBC news) but they were (it seems) wholly acceptable to 'Britain'. The fact that these missiles, of the NATO 'alliance', would remain within the control of US forces, who would alone keep the ignition keys, aroused concern in Italy but not (it seems) in 'Britain'.

The processes by which 'Britain' made up its mind, and came to this remarkable consensus, remained obscure. Wherever one looked, the decision had already been taken, or was just about to be taken, by someone else. 'Britain May Take Cruise Missiles' was the headline for Clare Hollingworth's account in the *Telegraph*, but her account commenced: 'The Government *will agree to* . . .' (31 October). 'Britain *has already agreed* to accept Cruise missiles,' she announced two weeks later (12 November). Then Henry Stanhope of *The Times* announced that 'Britain *has been* one of the strongest supporters of the American package,' and had even volunteered to take *more* of the missiles than originally intended 'because West Germany found that it did not have room for its whole quota' (14 November). The question 'is largely decided,' Gregory Teverton, Assistant Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, informed the *Observer* (18 November): 'Britain and Germany are committed . . .'

The 'mind of Britain' – and Britain's 'quota' – were made up, it seems, not in this country but in The Hague, by a NATO committee known as the High Level Group, whose instructions were passed on in turn to a thing called NPG, or NATO's Nuclear Planning Group (*The Times*, 13 November). Three features of the strategy by which 'Britain' was instructed that its mind was already decided may be noted.

The first we will call subliminal indoctrination: that is, the decision was presented as if agreement was already *assumed*. Viewers and readers were informed that 'Britain' had decided, and it was a matter of consensus. The second was that of suppression. The facts were disguised (so far as possible) from public knowledge that Norway, Denmark, France and Turkey had refused to have these missiles on their soil, and that the decision of Holland and Belgium hung in the balance of an alert and disturbed public opinion. The third was that of devaluing the issue. The decision was presented, not as one of high and controversial political concern, but as a trivial question of *technology*. The key-word in this strategy has been 'modernisation'. Only Luddites or seditionists could oppose *that*!

Within this obliterating barrage of opinion-management there was one discordant theme. This concerned the question of a successor to Britain's own independent nuclear weaponry (Polaris), to which Robin Cook alerted readers of the NEW STATESMAN in a remarkable article early this year (12 January 1979). The mind of 'Britain' on this matter did turn out to be divided – not as to whether we should burn money up on an 'independent' nuclear arsenal ('Britain' has, it seems, a seamless consensus in favour of doing that), but as between two options: should we replace Polaris with Trident missiles, at a cost of £5,000 million, or take the cheaper option of buying a few Cruise missiles of our own, to which the Americans might even allow us to have our own ignition keys?

Edward Thompson is the author of *The Making of the English Working Class*. His theme here continues from the article 'The secret state within the state' which he wrote in the NS (10 November 1978).

This question (it turned out) had also been 'decided': 'A firm decision has been taken at the Ministry of Defence' in favour of buying Tridents, David Fairhall informed the *Guardian* (1 November). Even so, the mind of Britain remained divided, because the Chief of the Defence Staff is an admiral, who, for obvious reasons, is keen on the Trident submarine strategy, whereas army and air force chiefs would prefer Cruise missiles which would fall within their own constituencies, and which option would also leave hundreds of millions over for their other expensive toys.

This savage in-fighting over the war budget, as our service chiefs seek to mobilise minuscule sectors of élite 'public opinion' upon their side, builds up a terrific pressure in the bladder of Official Secrecy. Suddenly, on such occasions, ordinary viewers and readers find themselves sprayed from on high by conflicting official leaks. We are once again back in the universe made familiar to us by Chapman Pincher (NEW STATESMAN, 10 November 1978). Admirals and generals and senior officials of the MoD stand against the wall of Fleet Street and leak in the public interest.

A lot of 'official secrets', in the form of Official Information, have been sprayed around in the past two months. We have been told the exact range of Cruise missiles; what kind of warhead is going on the Tridents; where the Cruise missiles will be sited (Lakenheath, Upper Heyford and Sculthorpe). We are told that 'a US air force team has been touring the UK', examining possible sites ('at least a dozen'). We are given a précis of highly-secret reports from NATO secret committees. And so on and on.

Since these breathtaking secrets usually appear simultaneously in rival establishment sheets, I think that we may take it that all this leaking is very much in the public interest. There is no imminent danger of Ms Clare Hollingworth, Mr David Fairhall or the secretariat of the International Institute for Strategic Studies being clapped into jail for betraying the secrets of our country.

LET US NOW consider this material. We may commence with some observations on official secrets. First, an Offical Secret is not defined by any objective criteria of secrecy, such as 'the national interest', but according to who tells it and how. If it is to *inform* public opinion, then it is an awesome secret, defended by State sanctions and threats of up to 14 years' imprisonment. If it is to *manage* public opinion, by established persons, then it is not. If Mr Duncan Campbell or I had come into possession of information as to decisions of the defence staff, the plans of NATO secret committees, or as to the warheads of missiles and their siting, and if Mr Bruce Page had been incautious enough to publish these, then we should all now be under arrest and awaiting trial before vetted juries.

Second – and following upon this – the foulest damage to our political life comes not from the 'secrets' which they hide from us, but

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O God of nations and of men, be witness today, we pray Thee, to the serious purpose of this occasion, and to the firm intent that this plane be a weapon solely of defense. Wilt Thou, therefore, bless this plane's purpose, that it may deter or quickly overcome aggression, and that it may truly become an instrument of peace – more ploughshare than sword, more pruning hook than spear.

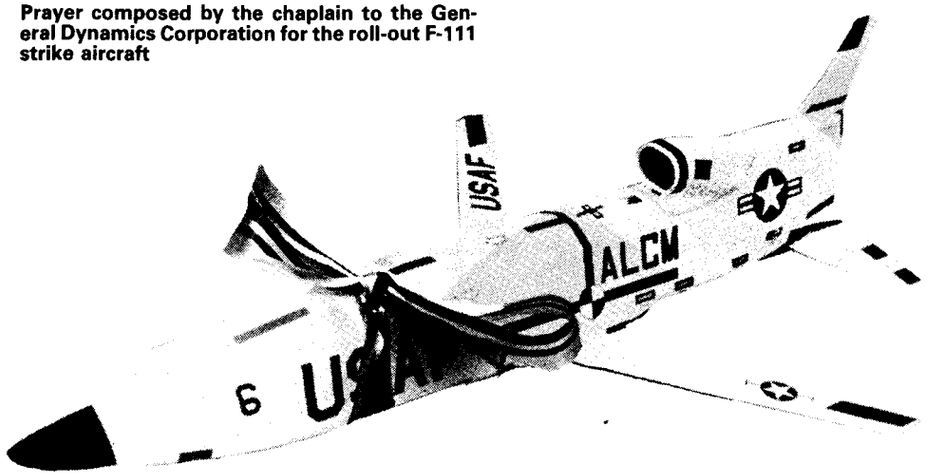
We thank Thee for the excellent minds and energy that brought this project to fruition, for the useful competition out of which it was born, and for the mutual cooperation which makes its production possible.

Bless too that spirit of mutual helpfulness that lies behind its intended use – a use that links firmness of purpose and economy in the use of scarce resources with national pride and the common defense.

Keep us strong in our striving for the right, and strongest in that inner spirit which acknowledges Thee as our Creator and our Provider and which hopes for the fuller accomplishment of the brotherhood of man, so that wars may cease and that Thy praise may be upon all men's lips, as Thine Image is in every man's face.

Amen

Prayer composed by the chaplain to the General Dynamics Corporation for the roll-out F-111 strike aircraft



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from the little bits of half-truth and disinformation which they *do* tell us. These are already pre-digested, and then are sicked up as little gobbets of authorised spew. The columns of defence correspondents in the establishment sheets serve as the spittoons.

That is, the Official Information which we *do* get is only the other side to the medal of the Official Secrets Acts. A new breed of journalist has emerged in the last decade (and, very certainly, not only in 'defence'). These never have to get off their arses, poke around, move about the world, or investigate anything. They simply taxi to official briefings in Whitehall, Westminster, Brussels or The Hague. They serve as supine vectors to convey to their readers official pap. Their only skills are those of managing minds, or of chatting up public relations persons at this Ministry or that, so as to express from their official bladders the last few drops of exclusive leak.

Offical Secrecy is not only a way of denying us honest information. It is a way of selling us pre-packaged decisions, accompanied by dishonest data and normative noise. Offical Secrecy, in controlling *all* information in forbidden areas, controls even more what we *do* know than what we don't. In the moment of offering us any information whatsoever it attempts to control also what we are permitted to think.

Third, the function of Official Secrecy is not to deny knowledge to any 'enemy' but to delude and manage the opinion of the native population – that is, us. A nice example of this primary function came some weeks ago when the *Omaha World Herald* disclosed that we came within a hair's breadth of radioactive disaster in July 1956 when a B47 bomber crashed at Lakenheath. If the TNT component in three nuclear bombs had been ignited by fuel blazing all around their hideaway, then (a retired US airforce general said) 'it is possible that a part of eastern England would have become a desert'. Plutonium would have been released into the air, 'spreading radiation over a very wide area, giving cancer to those in contact and making the locality uninhabitable'.

Now this is, exactly, what an Official Secret *is*. It has been a well-kept secret, even though (it seems) it was known to members of Eden's government, senior service staff, and officials at the MoD. The secret was kept, of course, from us, and not from any 'enemy', just as the Soviet nuclear disaster in the Urals (which Zhores Medvedev has disclosed) is still kept as a secret, not from us, but from the Russian people.

In those distant days, I and other readers were tramping the Aldermaston road in support of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. We carried some part of public opinion. We carried churches and trade unions. We carried the Labour Party conference, until the entire media swung around behind Gaitskell to fight our resolutions off. If the near-disaster at Lakenheath had then been known to the public, I have little doubt that we would have carried the country. Neither Cruise missiles nor £5,000 million for Tridents would be on the British agenda today.

It is enough to make one tired. It is even enough to make one angry. One does not have all that much life to spend on little meetings and tramping down roads. What other near-disasters are being kept under civil service hats until the *Nevada Cosmos Tribune* sees fit to let us know?

There is also that other little bit in the *Omaha World Herald*. Official secrecy was essential in 1956, it seems, because 'the Eden government had concealed from the British people the fact that American atomic bombs were being stockpiled in the UK'. As the former US air chief said: 'Orders came down to keep "nukes" out of the records. Officially they did not exist.'

ONE DOES NOT have to be a defence 'expert' to see that what is going on now is imbecile. There is the matter of where these missiles are going to be sited. At first we were told, on telly, that they were going to be scattered around in woods across East Anglia and the South Midlands. Then (David Fairhall) that the missiles will be kept together in a few sacred US sanctuaries:

> The individual missile launchers are mobile and if war threatened they would be scattered round the countryside. But to minimise costs, and perhaps more importantly the political and environmental impact of this unfamiliar weapons system, the peacetime deployment plans now being prepared in the Ministry of Defence envisage concentrating them in two, or possibly three locations (*Guardian*, 31 October).

And, reassuringly, the Cruise 'makes no noise and the only inconvenience the local population will experience is the occasional sight of the missile launchers on the roads' (*Telegraph*, 31 October). That is likely to be no small inconvenience to the nerves of 'the local population', since we are also told that 'the missiles would begin to move around the countryside only in times of extreme tension' (*Observer*, 18 November).

And what is a time of 'extreme tension'? Is it a time, perhaps, when there are sudden oil embargoes, or when truculent students occupy US embassies in Asian cities? If Cruise mis-

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siles were already here, the local population might have noticed much movement around the countryside in recent weeks.

If nuclear war breaks out it is not going to be after a formal ultimatum and a gentlemanly count-down to zero, so that missile launchers can be sent down minor roads and across hayfields and into prepared emplacements in the woods – and only then can we all start fair together. The only possibility of genocidal 'victory' lies in the pre-emptive strike. The warning-time, which was once placed at 48 hours, is now calculated by 'experts' at 30 minutes, or even at 15 (*Telegraph*, 12 November; *Now!*, 16-22 November).

Whether war starts by accident or intent, it will start without more than a few days' warning, and (from the standpoint of the civilian population) it will finish in a day. (The high politicians and the service chiefs, in their deep strategic caves, submarines or stratospheric command posts, may slog it out for a few more weeks.) While NATO might be willing to write off the 'local population' (that is, us), it would not put its Tomahawks to an 'inconvenience' of that kind.

If the missiles come, they will be stationed to strike, or the whole operation is fantasy. I write this as a very knowledgeable military expert who, regrettably, has not yet found employment with the *Observer* or the BBC. In the last war I once arrived at a battle half an hour late, owing to the distance to be travelled and the difficult nature of Italian country tracks; fortunately the infantry whom my tanks were supposed to be supporting had not yet been over-run.

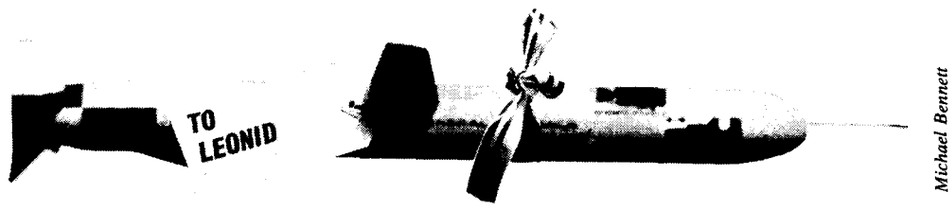
NATO is not going to have its expensive hardware bogged down to the axle in East Anglian byways. (More happens in thirty minutes now than used to happen then.) Nor is NATO going to start dispersing its missiles around the place only when 'extreme tension' has already arisen, since any such dispersal would be monitored by satellite observation and would be the instant signal to an enemy to press a pre-emptive ballistic button.

But, look where you will, there is no end to the insanity of the whole operation. One might suppose that 'modernising' NATO's nuclear armament might, at the least, allow us to spend less on conventional weapons and armies. Not at all. Mr Francis Pym, the Defence Secretary, in an exclusive interview given (as it happens) not to the House of Commons but to Sir James Goldsmith's *Now!* (9-15 November), has explained patiently that the more nuclear 'deterrence' there is, the more dangerous the situation becomes, and hence the greater the need to raise the level of conventional armaments as an alternative option to nuclear war. It is 'very important not to let our conventional forces run down, because if you do the result is to lower the nuclear threshold and weaken deterrence'.

This is not just a closed circle of 'deterrence', like a horse-gin, in which we must plod round and round for ever grinding out terror until something snaps or the horse falls dead on its side. It is a manic spiral of proliferating terror and proliferating expense, with misjudgment, hysteria, or accident becoming statistically more inevitable every day. And *why*, since there is already terror enough, ten times over, ballistically poised at both ends of Power's great divide, do we need this intermediate additive of terror at all? Ah, it is a safeguard to *prevent* the ultimate horror of a Soviet/US total nuclear war! It is to 'localise' nuclear war: that is, to keep nuclear war local to us, and to West and East Europe, and away from America.

Britain's 'primary role is to survive as a forward NATO base' (*Now!*, 9-15 November). Or not to survive, as the case may be. Mr Gregory Teverton (who, we should recall, is an *international* expert) tells us that the threat of a Soviet nuclear attack on Western Europe might 'put American cities at risk'. 'Missiles in Western Europe would give the American President an intermediate option' (*Observer*, 18 November). No wonder the US service chiefs are determined to keep control of the ignition keys to 'our contribution' to NATO, since if such an 'option' had to be taken, the 'local population' might not be so keen to opt.

Three further comments. The first is self-evident. The whole operation of Official-Secrecy-cum-Prepackaged-Official-Information carries with it another kind of threat – that of internal terror. For if all the organs of the State and the media combine to impose a 'consensus' upon us, then it follows that the other side of the consensus (or those who fall outside it) must represent 'treason'.



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There is a lot of this kind of talk around, as you may have noticed. *Now!* is very explicit as to the motives of anyone opposed to the consensus: 'Severe disruption of national life by Soviet special forces, operating together with undercover KGB "teams" and fifth columnists would take place days or hours before the first air strikes on Britain' (9-15 November).

Good heavens, if such traitors and fifth columnists are lying in wait, then they must already be here! 'Speak for Britain, Mrs Thatcher!' squeals Peregrine Worsthorne (who has always had difficulty in distinguishing his own liver condition from the National Interest). 'Barbarians' are not only 'at the gate', they are 'within our own borders'. They burst forth, in their 'alien style', in the industrial troubles of last winter:

> Those brutal, angry faces seemed scarcely human, let alone British, arousing reactions of dismay among all classes rather as would the emergence of strange creatures from the nether regions . . . There seemed to be a stench of evil in the land. (*Sunday Telegraph*, 2 December)

Much the same thought, in more elegant terms, has occurred to the Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, Hugh Trevor-Roper: 'It is the function of MI5 to keep an eye on suspect contacts, and who can say exactly where, in the amorphous Labour Party, the eastern frontiers are now drawn?' (*Spectator*, 24 November). It is a chilling image, and chilling when it comes from that high table of cultivation. Against the geographic eastern frontier we must mount the Pershing-2 and the Tomahawk; against the 'eastern frontier' of the human mind and moral sensibility, what modernised weapons will Trevor-Roper now grant to MI5?

The second comment is that all this has gone on, and for months, not through any open democratic process but behind democracy's back. There has not even been, prior to the decision of 'Britain' at Brussels, any debate in Parliament. I don't know that this greatly matters, seeing how rabbity parliaments are these days and how servile the opposition front bench. But there *are* some honest MPs, who would have asked awkward questions, to which answers must have been given. And for form's sake there could have been gestures – a White Paper, a debate.

Why does the Defence Secretary make his most luminous statements to *Now!* or to Brian Walden on ITV's *Weekend World*? And why can we be told, by the *Times* defence correspondent (15 November), that, in relation to the siting of Cruise missiles –

> Mr Pym is understood to be considering ways in which this should be presented to the British public – particularly in East Anglia and Oxfordshire . . .

when one might suppose that he would also be considering how to solicit the assent of Parliament?

But that is the giveaway phrase: 'ways in which this should be presented to the British public.' Politics has nothing left to it now but this: lies, disinformation, the management of opinion, the theatrical show of legitimation. Decisions are taken elsewhere: by NATO's High Level Group, by defence and service chiefs. Politicians are the servile and oily-tongued liars, the shady brokers who put these decisions across.

WHICH LEADS ONE to ask – *what* has the Parliamentary Labour Party been up to? Labour's official policy, as founded on conference decisions, and as declared in its 1974 manifesto, was unambiguous: 'We have renounced any intention of moving to a new generation of strategic nuclear weapons.' 'Renounce' is a word without ambiguity: my dictionary gives, *inter alia*, 'revoke', 'disown', 'reject', 'give up', 'consent formally to abandon', 'repudiate', 'refuse to recognise longer', 'withdraw from', and (please note) 'not to follow suit at cards'. That would seem to be clear. It does not say 'go along with in privy and devious ways, following every suit that NATO leads'.

My dictionary, like the Authorised Version, no doubt needs modernising. And Mr Callaghan can show us how this should be done. For he modernised Labour's clearly-stated policy in the election manifesto of this year (without consulting either the Parliamentary Party or his own National Executive) by inserting some slippery provisos:

> We reiterate our belief that this [i.e. renunciation] is the best course for Britain. But many great issues affecting our allies and the world are involved, and a new round of strategic arms limitation (*sic*!) negotiations will soon begin. We think it essential that there must be full and informed debate about these issues in the country before any decision is taken.

Yes. And how much has Mr Callaghan done to drive forward this 'full and informed debate'? Inside the House? No. Inside the Party? No. Outside the House? No. If we can trust some further official secrets leaked in

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The Times (4 December), his mind has been on other things. For it seems that, during the last 18 months of his administration, a 'small ad hoc committee' of the Cabinet was being convened by Mr Callaghan, so immeasurably secret that the Cabinet was not informed of its existence. This committee, or gang of four, was so very privy that it did not even have a name or number: it was an unconstitutional and secret faction of the Prime Minister, Dr David Owen, Mr Healey and Mr Mulley.

> In Mr Callaghan's judgment the matter was too delicate to put before the Cabinet's Defence and Overseas Policy Committee, upon which sat one or two sticklers who might have reminded him of the party's manifesto commitment.

It was not, however, too secret to have a slate of senior civil servants in attendance on it, headed by Sir Antony Duff of the Foreign Office, nor too privy to be leaked, in due course, to *The Times*. The function of this committee, or gang, was precisely to prepare for the next generation of nuclear weapons.

With this, Official Secrecy advances its frontiers to the very verge of the authoritarian state. The 'eastern frontiers' are now drawn through the elected government itself. One 'stickler' who was denied knowledge of the Cabinet's own operations was perhaps the Deputy Minister, Mr Michael Foot, and, if so, his exclusion from this gang is to his credit. What is now officially secret is what leading Cabinet members, and the Deputy Prime Minister, may not know.

For the 'all-party consensus', and *especially* the submission of the PLP to the 'consensus', is the lynch-pin of the whole operation. It is this fiction which legitimates all that is done to us – the suppression of information, the manipulation of the media, the exclusion of critical questions from the arena of national political life. And what an ineffably craven and captive set those PLP 'leaders' – those cringing uncles and tailor's models and thugs of the rostrum and inept conference wheeler-dealers – are!

The final comment is that, in the past three months, the British people have been publicly shamed, not only in their own self-esteem but also in the esteem of Europe generally. If we had had a debate, some kind of a row about it all, then – even if sanity had lost the day – people would at least have known that there was still a little breath in the lungs of British democracy. But there has not even been a little moan. There has been *worse* than a moan, for 'British public opinion', like one of those animated corpses in a Hammer Horror film, has been sent around Europe to cajole *other* nations to act against their consciences.

Mr Francis Pym has proudly proclaimed that 'we' want to 'keep our allies up to the mark' (*Now!*, 9-15 November). At the West German SPD conference this month, Chancellor Schmidt has been able to use our name to confuse his own critics. And our press has seen fit to deliver editorial homilies to the reluctant Dutch:

> The Alliance does not usually ask much of the Dutch, who lead a comfortable and prosperous life at the heart of Western Europe.

Thus the *Financial Times*, 19 November, (whose readers are not noted for their austerity and self-sacrifice) which goes on to chide the Dutch for being 'smug and hypocritical'. I do not know what concerned Norwegians or Danes or Dutch think of 'Britain' today; but if they think of us with contempt I could not argue that this is unjust.

As to the facts of the matter, the supposed nuclear balance or imbalance, between Soviet SS-20s and backfire bombers and NATO F-111s and Polaris and Poseidon submarines, I can only recommend readers to turn back to Robin Cook's succinct summary in these pages (30 November). In half a column he conveyed more information than in sheet after sheet of the established organs. It is his conclusion that 'the overall nuclear line-up remains entirely unfavourable' to the Soviets.

WHETHER Cook is right or wrong (he is usually right), there are manifest and sufficient reasons for accepting the official Labour policy of *renouncing* a new generation of nuclear weapons (whether NATO or our own): reasons rational, ethical, and even tactical, which I cannot – and need not – now rehearse. But I must, at least, refuse the false choice which we are so often offered, between NATO and the unending inflation of mutual nuclear terror on one hand, and a moralistic 'gesture' of national self-exemption on the other.

I am not critical of moralistic gestures. They are often the signs of a deeper realism, and those Christians in Holland who advocate this have my respect. What I am opposing is the notion that renunciation of the means of nuclear terror entails *any* kind of opting-out from the discourse of the world.

The alternative which some of us have advocated on the Left for more than twenty years is the policy of 'active neutrality'. We argued this policy within the counsels of CND. We argued it again in the *May Day Manifesto* in 1967-8. And we argue it still. It has never been a position of sufficient propriety to permit its discussion (as a 'viable option') in the media, although I have noticed plenty of editorials and telly programmes aimed *against* its unexpressed and misreported theorems. For a good many years (I am sad to report) it was not even possible to state the position in this journal.

I will restate it now, as concisely as I can, as theorems.

1. The present nuclear status quo is inexpressibly dangerous and increasingly unstable. It is exceedingly probable that it will at some point detonate in global nuclear war, whether through accident, miscalculation or hysteria.

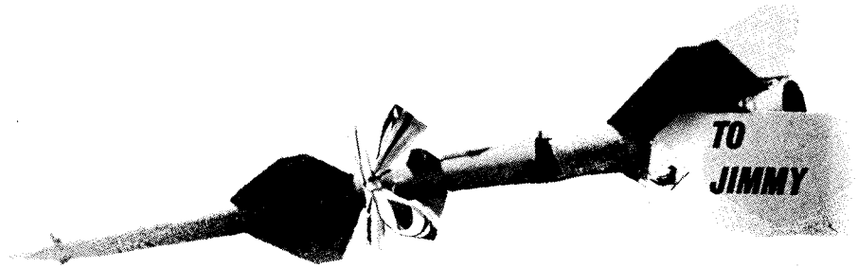
2. The status quo is a stationary state. It is (from the standpoint of democratic practices) a degenerative state: that is, it generates authoritarian tendencies, and is supportive of secretive and authoritarian bureaucracies within both halves of the divided world.

3. The bureaucratic élites engendered by this condition develop, in turn, a distinct *interest* in maintaining this condition. Moreover, in a curious manner, the two opposed élites (Soviet and US) develop a *common* interest in repressing any unseemly development or popular initiative within the system which might create instability within their delicate strategic equilibrium. Thus, the US held back from 'taking advantage' of the Czech unrest in 1968, and the Soviet Union did not 'take advantage' of this year's revolutionary situation in Iran. Both powers loathe democratic initiatives – and their possible contagion.

4. Hence to wait for ultimate *détente* from initiatives at the top to wait for some SALT treaty in 2079 – is futile. For the state of permanent terror affords to these élites their purchase upon internal and external power.

5. Hence the system must be made to crumble at the bottom before it will give way at the top.

Twenty years ago we argued that Britain should not only renounce nuclear weapons, but should also renounce NATO and initiate new policies of active neutrality. We should resume initiatives towards a Europe which included Stockholm, Belgrade and Warsaw, as well as towards India and the 'Third World' or non-aligned powers.



Michael Bennett

We were told, in those days, that this would leave Britain 'naked in the conference chamber' and without allies. That was rubbish then, but in the last twenty years developments in Europe and in the Third World have converged to enforce the realism of our policy. Greece and France have detached themselves from NATO, and the skies have not fallen. Yugoslavia has maintained its stubborn national integrity. Rumania has edged into a curious position of truculent dependence. Within NATO itself, second and third tiers are discernible – Norway, Denmark, Holland, and Iceland, Portugal and (shortly) Spain – which are refusing nuclear hardware and keeping open other initiatives.

What a British Labour government might have done – might even still do – with a policy of democratic socialism at home and of active neutrality abroad would be to re-enter into an international discourse which would invigorate democratic practices both East and West. As a new neutralist heartland re-emerged in Europe, a hundred forms of political and cultural bonding would go on, not only between socialist and radical movements in West and South Europe, but also with the huge reserves of 'dissidence' in East Europe – and within the Soviet Union itself.

That such a policy would be complex, delicate and entail great risks, as the US and Soviet élites felt the ground begin to crumble beneath them, is evident. If we were to leave NATO, in fact as well as form, we could expect revenges from Washington and Bonn, just as the Soviet Union would exact revenges upon any Eastern European nation which responded in the same neutralist kind. There would be 'red alerts', and missile launchers would scurry down West and East German

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lanes.

But that will happen anyway. It will very certainly happen if Mr Pym and Mr Callaghan get their way. We are already at risk – Britain, Europe, civilisation, the human project – whatever big name we wish to put upon it. The difference between us is this. In the 'new generation' of nuclear weapons we might subdue for a while immediate and manifest risks while centralised authoritarian power (and its concomitant management of the mind) encroached further year by year, and we drifted towards some unpredictable and unplanned contingency, an ultimate detonation. In the policy of active neutrality we would take an immediate and conscious risk, which, if we survived, would engender a new generation of human possibilities.

But we will not take that risk. NATO will not permit it, and Mr Pym, Mr Callaghan and the controllers of the public mind will not permit it even to be discussed. There is only one freedom left to us now: the freedom to get out of our chairs and turn the television off.

RESISTANCE

The troublemaker from Heidenheim

Who was the man, 40 years ago, who almost killed Hitler? What was Johann Georg Elser's motivation? Four years ago J. P. Stern, Professor of German at University College London, wrote a remarkable booked called *Hitler, The Fuhrer and the People*: its impact, when translated into German, owed much to the fact that it gave the first serious account of Elser (who had long been thought of as a crank, or a British stooge). Last month, Elser's home town decided to honour his memory. PETER STERN and SHEILA STERN were invited to attend the events, and this is their report.

SEEN from afar, the picture seemed quite clear.

A small town in Southern Germany – in that strangely independent minded province of Swabia, to be exact – had come to a corporate decision to celebrate, on 9 November 1979, the fortieth anniversary of the attempt on Hitler's life by a working-class man who had been one of its citizens.

Everyone in Heidenheim knew about the journeyman carpenter Georg Elser, but very few ever expected to find him being commemorated with solemnities, like a real hero. For some years past the local branch of the DKP (the new German Communist Party) has annually laid a wreath on the memorial to him set up in a small park in the quarter where Elser had lived for a time (the tablet is a good deal smaller and less conspicuous than the memorial on a hill above the town commenorating the only other prominent Heidenheimer – Field Marshal Erwin Rommel).

It was obviously with a good deal of amazement that some of the townspeople had come across a book entitled *Hitler: der Führer und das Volk* and first published in English, the longest chapter of which was devoted to Georg Elser. Based on the oppressively complete Gestapo files of the case, the chapter attempted to characterise 'Hitler's true antagonist' by showing how the initially similar social situations of the two men had issued in a series of absolute contrasts: modesty, decency and a quiet awareness of personal worth on the one hand, total self-assertiveness and endless tantrums of 'my absolute will' on the other; immense pride of work and craftsmanlike conscientiousness against dilettantism, demagogy and showiness; a halting, unskilled and different langauage articulating an astonishing independence of mind, against rhetoric of a high order wholly in the service of a ramshackle ideology – in short, a free man against one obsessed by his own ambitions and fears. This contrast formed the background to an analysis of the motives that led Elser to his attempt on Hitler's life, and to the central question of what had sustained him in the total solitude of his twelve months of careful preparation.

Together, a Protestant and a Catholic clergyman, who were on friendly terms and had collaborated in various ecumenical experiments, came to the conclusion that Elser's was a case overdue for municipal and ecclesiastical attention. As a result of their joint lobbying an invitation came from the town of Heidenheim to the author of the book on Hitler and his wife, to join in a three-part programme consisting of a documentary play (originally composed, from the book, for the BBC), public town-hall discussion, and a Sunday morning memorial celebration with address, flowers and a brass band; the solemn offering of wreaths at the memorial stone was to close the proceedings.

ALL THIS was clear enough, yet as we flew to Stuttgart a number of uneasy questions occupied our minds. Were the three planned occasions not too many, and would the civic junketing not be overcast by gloom? After all, Elser's attempt was frustrated by the merest chance through Hitler's leaving his Bürgerbräukeller meeting on 9 November 1939 thirteen minutes earlier than planned, Elser's bomb had killed eight people and injured more than sixty others, and he himself was shot in Dachau a few days before the war ended, when Hitler and his myrmidons had to recognise the improbability of being able to stage a show-trial in London and producing him there as an agent of the British secret service.

It was Elser's peculiar fate to be constantly assigned, by his contemporaries and later by misguided journalists and historians, to groups and allegiances with which he had in fact no connection. Apart from the British secret service story, there were rumours, after the war, to the effect that he had really been hired by the Gestapo, or the SS, or a dissident National Socialist called Otto Strasser, either to kill Hitler or to stage a scenario of Hitler's providential escape (this version is taken over by Alan Bullock in his Hitler biography).

Peter and Sheila Stern. He was born in Czechoslovakia, educated at Cambridge and served during the war with the Czech army.

The entirely accidental survival of the verbatim Gestapo transcript of Elser's depositions, some of them made under torture, leaves no reasonable doubt that all these hypotheses, parading as facts, are wrong. The Gestapo officials who cross-examined Elser were the only ones who were immediately convinced of the truth of what he said – would we be faced by people who still doubted the evidence because (like the National Socialist leaders) they would not believe that *a single German working-class man* was capable of acting independently and on his own initiative?

Would we succeed in convinvcing our audience that here was a man whom no group or party or ism was entitled to claim for its own? That he represented a phenomenon almost unknown in German history – a true nonconformist with *Zivilcourage*, Heidenheim's Robert Kett?* A perfectly ordinary man who was a highly skilful carpenter, played the double bass and the accordion, had a number of love-affairs and, when the time came, acted without thought of personal gain, from (one blushes to admit it) the highest moral and spiritual motives?

And, since the portrayal of Elser as 'a Man Without Ideology' was bound to be hotly disputed by the Communists, who were claiming to see in him a Marxistically motivated working-class hero, would we therefore find ourselves overwhelmed by the not exactly disinterested assent of the Right?

And finally: in praising an essentially political act of violence ('I wanted to prevent greater bloodshed', Elser had said under cross-examination; and 'I was convinced that the Munich agreement of last year [1938] would not be adhered to, that Germany would make further demands on other countries and incorporate other countries and that therefore war was inevitable . . .') – would we be taken to be advocating political violence generally? Sanctioning the actions of the terrorists?

Well – these were some of our anticipatory thoughts as the municipal Mercedes drove us over the darkening Schwäbische Alb to Heidenheim and depositied us at the local theatre, where an amateur group performed an adaptation of the radio play to an overwhelmingly full house. On us, at least, the impact was tremendous. Sitting near us in the audience, with his wife, was Georg Elser's brother Leonhard (a carpenter too). Having shaken hands with them, to be plunged into darkness and to hear the well-simulated voice of Hitler summoning the German people to follow him to perdition, robbed us of our serene objectivity in a few seconds. The subject of Elser's life and motivation, which we had discussed so often, seemed suddenly to

*Robert Kett was a sixteenth-century English rebel. Although a landowner himself, he took the side of the poor of Norfolk, and was executed in 1549.

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have reached out and drawn us in to where it was still a matter of personal memories, affections, habits and of passionate involvement – not 'history' at all. The heavy local accent in which the main character was played was of course Elser's own; the man who took the part, a workman in a Heidenheim factory, brought us closer to Elser than we had ever expected to be.

This, generally and repeatedly, was the most important thing that happened during the three-and-a-half days of our visit: to see this slow-moving community – a true 'home town' of the social historian – coming to terms with its past through one of their lot; to see it being forcibly brought face to face with what every other such community in Germany has catagorically denied – the possibility of political resistance.

TALKING to Leonhard Elser and his wife in their home, we became aware of the unexpected openess and warmth of their attitude to us. We came from far away, yet as strangers who understood their past and its anguish we were not going to be treated as strangers, we were indeed closer than some of the town's rich industrialists who preferred to ignore the occasion. Hitler had often boasted that he 'instinctively knew the little man's worries, where his shoe pinches'. Now we knew what he meant.

We were initiated into the tensions and resentments inseparable from the possession of a local hero. 'Why all the fuss?' one lady asked. 'He killed those people – nobody praises the quiet citizens who did no harm to anyone.' It was not possible, nor would it have been right, to tell her that being a quiet citizen was all very well, but that being millions of quiet citizens was – unthinkable.

Another revelation was the fragmentation of small places into tiny places. It's there as a major theme in nineteenth-century literature – most perfectly in the Swiss Gottfried Keller – but that it should have survived in such fierce integrity could only be appreciated in direct contact with the *Bürger* of a town which had no tourist attractions, no foreign visitors, and hence no detached view of its own status.

Some opposition to the Heidenheim celebration had been voiced on the ground that Elser was actually born in Hermaringen, a miniscule village some miles away; that he lived in another small village called Königsbronn (as his brother still does); and that even when he lived in Heidenheim he *really* lived in the working-class suburb called Schnaitheim – which was only incorporated in 1907, has its own dialect, its own cuisine, its own Communist Party, and even its own town-hall.

This means of course its own deputy-mayor, a courtesy title for an official utterly devoted to the small world of Schnaitheim. Not for him the splendours of the immense, brand-new *Bürgerhaus* of Heidenheim with its elaborate air conditioning, split-level labyrinths and vistas, exhibition areas and comfortable seating; and its roomy auditorium, where the public discussion meeting was held on the Saturday evening.

Once more the sheer size of the audience was astonishing. The involvement and tension that had been latent in the audience at the play was explicit during this curious session. The chairman allowed each of the platform speakers to make a brief statement, but most of the three-and-a-half hours was occupied in contributions from the floor. These made it

Johann Georg Elser was born in 1903, and became an expert carpenter and metal-worker. His attempt to kill Hitler failed because the Chancellor left the Munich Bürgerbraükeller several minutes early on 8 November 1939. He was murdered at Dachau in 1944 after Hitler had given up hope of staging a show trial in London.

perfectly plain that the occasion had become one for letting off a considerable head of steam. Speaker after speaker pointed out to the Heidenheim gentlemen on the platform that but for the interest of the visitor from England, Elser, as a working man, would never have received any attention in his own place.

There was a brief shouting-match between a well-known young Communist (super-salesman, we heard afterwards, for Rank-Xerox) and the Mayor of Heidenheim. But apart from this exciting incident, during which old scores and new sores were made public while the PR-conscious mayor watched us in an agony of embarrassment, the platform took its medicine like several very honest men.

THE MOST important effect of the discussion, and its most moving moments, were produced by two elderly speakers, both close friends and workmates of Elser's, who spoke up in public for the first time since the events of forty years ago.

The first described with apparently total recall ('It was that summer of '39, when there were so many raspberries') his unexpected meeting with Elser in the nearby hills ('da ginge wir nämlich so oft inne Himbeerer'), and Elser's determination to keep aloof from everyone who knew him as the moment approached for his attempt on Hitlers' life – everyone, it transpired, except perhaps his father, with whom he had been on bad terms for many years, but whom (it seems) he trusted in his anguish and solitude.

The other old man, a life-long Communist, testified to Elser's refusal to join or work for the local party, and ended by saying, 'The professor from England is right. Elser was a great idealist, but he was no Communist'.

They say England is the land of class-distinctions, and it is certainly true that the immense and visibly general prosperity of a small industrial town like Heidenheim is based on a conscious identification of working people with the interests of factory owners and management. But this is a functional alliance, and the class-division, manifest in working-class feelings of shyness and inferiority which have no parallel in England, remains as strong as it has ever been.

There was no end to the kindness and thoughtfulness we met from everyone, so it may seem churlish to record that Elser's brother and sister-in-law were never included in the numerous occasions when we sat down to a convivial meal or drinks with our hosts from town-hall, presbytery and vicarage – and yet the two priests, who had after all thought the whole thing up, were on the warmest personal terms with their working-class parishioners and spoke with them as with intmate friends.

When we visited the Elsers, they shared an excellent bottle of Franconian burgundy with us and gave us presents. If Georg Elser was there in spirit at this most surprising of civic celebrations, he must have been ruefully aware that, as a member of the town-hall audience pointed out, it makes a great deal of difference whether your hero is a Field Marshal or a carpenter, even long after he is dead.

The Sunday morning celebration was a solemn blend of the various elements we had seen at work. Somewhat pale still from the unwinding-session we had participated in at a restaurant after the discussion the night before, we gathered in the crowded assembly hall of the Schnaitheim school and listened to a brief memorial address by 'The London professor' who was surrounded by magnificent flower arrangements and a passable brass-band.

THE FIRST main point of the address was to underline Elser's sense of personnal responsibility and his Job-like refusal to present his decision to act in religious terms. During his cross-examination, recorded in a section of the Gestapo dossier headed 'Weltanschauung', Elser had said:

> I believe that the whole world and human life too were created by God. I believe that nothing happens in the world without God's knowledge. I expect people are free to do as they wish, though God can interfere whenever he wants to.
>
> Me too he has left to do as I wish. Whether he has interfered in my action and caused the Führer to leave earlier, I just don't know.

The second was to show that Elser's courage and decency, and his awareness of using terrible means to a desired good end, were part and parcel of his reasonableness *and* his simple religious beliefs. The relevant text is Romans xii/1:

> I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies

not as the gory, pointless, self-sufficient sacrifice which was at the heart of the national-socialist ideology but

> as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Afterwards, in pale sunshine, wreaths were placed on Elser's modest memorial in the tiny Schnaitheim park named after him. Have you many revolutionaries in England? we were asked by an elderly Communist widow-lady of the neighbourhood. It was a difficult question to answer. The circumstances we attempted to suggest, were different in England. Did she mean revolutionaries like Hitler? or like the Baader-Meinhof group? or . . . She went off without shaking hands; a bit of a slap in the face, really.

Hitler, the Führer and the People is published by Collins/Fontana. Elser's story has been told in the BBC documentary *The Man Without Qualities*.

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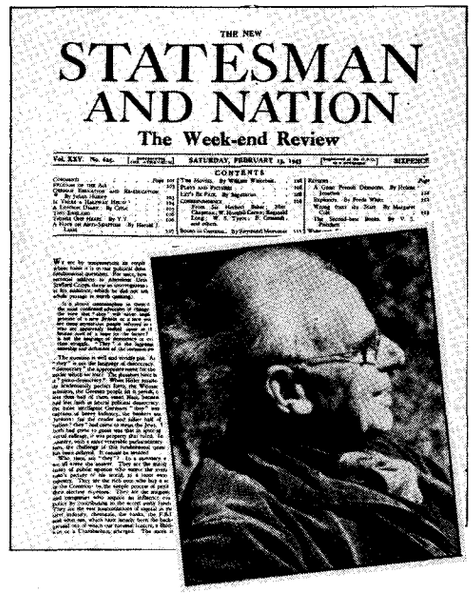
Prophecies of the Elder Statesman

Lately, the NEW STATESMAN *has changed quite a bit in appearance and in outlook. These changes have been accompanied by a definite up-turn in circulation – we finish this year back on the right side of 40,000 and our across-the-counter trade in Britain is up more than 12 per cent on the same period last year. None of us responsible for these changes is fool enough to imagine this is anything more than a beginning: we're quite aware that the task of restoring the* NS *to its one-time pre-eminence remains difficult, and dangerous.*

We're also conscious, from letters and conversational feedback, that the changes we've made appear as a break with the STATESMAN's *valued past. We are accused of 'left-wing extremism', and of exhibiting a certain contempt for – anyway, lack of interest in – the weekly show at Westminster. Depending a little on what you mean by 'extremism', there could be something in these accusations. Whether they do violence to the* STATESMAN's *history is something else again.*

We reprint here an editorial written in February 1943 by H. N. Brailsford (right), one of the greatest of English radical journalists. It was aimed into the centre of an argument then raging over the shape that post-war Britain should assume, and it echoes prophetically into our own time – when everyone can see how readily the achievements of an over-easy consensus succumb to the attacks of a conservatism now too panic-stricken to temporise.

When navigational difficulties occur, it makes sense to look back over the course sailed so far (something that Edward Thompson attempts in another article this week). And, leaving aside one or two nuances and anachronisms, most of what Brailsford had to say is as relevant now as the day when it was written – rather before most of the editorial staff of the present-day NEW STATESMAN *were born.*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WE ARE by temperament an empirical people, whose habit it is in our political debates to avoid fundamental questions. For once, however, in his rectorial address to Aberdeen University, Sir Stafford Cripps threw an interrogation of this kind at his audience, which he did not answer. The whole passage is worth quoting:

> It is almost commonplace in these days to hear the most confirmed advocates of change expressing the view that 'they' will never implement the promise of a new Britain or a new world. Who are these mysterious people referred to as 'they,' who are apparently looked upon as the veriest broken reed of a hope for the future? 'They' is not the language of democracy or even of the class struggle. 'They' is the language of dictatorship and defeatism of the common people.

The question is well and vividly put. Assuredly 'they' is not the language of democracy. But is 'democracy' the appropriate name for the system under which we live? The dictators have baptised it 'pluto-democracy.' When Hitler assailed it in its academically perfect form, the Weimar Constitution, the German people let it perish, though less than half of them voted Nazi, because they had lost faith in liberal political democracy. For the more intelligent Germans 'they' were the captains of heavy industry, the bankers and the Junkers: for the cruder and sillier half of that nation 'they' had come to mean the Jews. What both had come to guess was that in spite of universal suffrage, it was property that ruled. In our country, with a more venerable parliamentary system, the challenge of this fundamental question has been delayed. It cannot be avoided.

Who, then, are 'they'? In a summary way we all know the answer. They are the manipulators of public opinion who weave the average man's picture of his world, as a loom weaves tapestry. They are the rich men who buy a seat in the Commons by the simple process of paying their election expenses. They are the magnates and companies who acquire an influence over policy by contributing to the secret party funds. They are the vast concentrations of capital in the steel industry, chemicals, the banks, the F.B.I. and what not, which have latterly been the background out of which our national leaders, a Baldwin or a Chamberlain, emerged. The more it changes, as it does in wartime, the more is it the same thing. We control industry in the national interest, but at the head of all the controls sit the magnates whose study in times of peace is to wring wealth out of scarcity. 'They' marry and spend their week-ends with the enfeebled and diluted landed aristocracy. Their younger sons and cousins, drilled in what we call, with our ironical Anglo-Saxon humour, 'public schools,' form a ruling class which runs the Services and the Empire. With a consummate art of compromise and flattery, perfected through several generations, 'they' have learned how to manage democracy.

'But,' the reader may object. 'is there not a Labour Party?' There was. At its best it was always handicapped by its relative poverty. It could not attract its share of the clever, calculating young men to whom its rivals offered a career. It seemed to repel the technicians. It was overwhelmed in the press and even now has only one daily newspaper. It could never get a footing in rural constituencies, where landowners and capitalist farmers, with their stranglehold over tied cottages and the distribution of employment, dominated the village worker, body and soul. It built up in the towns and mining areas a big and loyal voting strength, which seemed, however, to have little prospect of achieving an absolute majority. If by good luck it could have got a majority, how firm would it have stood when 'they' used the press, the Lords' veto and the terrific engine of financial pressure and intimidation to discredit its administration and delay its legislation?

For some years past this Labour Party has seemed to lose sight of the socialist objective its pioneers set for it. Increasingly the Trade Unions dominate it, and some, but by no means all of them, have a somewhat bureaucratic structure. They reply to the wealth of 'them' by using their collective funds to get their own nominees returned to the House. It has become difficult to see in this elderly party of Trade Union officials, under a leader who effaces himself, the dynamic instrument of any fundamental change. What prevails in it is the Trade Union outlook – the tactics, that is to say, of men who accept the capitalist system as a permanency, but seek to secure within it, by combination and bargaining, better conditions for the manual workers. 'They', with their Anglo-Saxon sagacity, are willing enough to treat with the moderates of Transport House. At the moment, as Sir Walter Citrine has told us, a delegation from the TUC is sitting round a table with representatives of the employers, to work out a post-war plan for British industry. That seems to imply the recognition by both sides of some common principles. Big Business has certainly not abandoned the restrictive policy at which every quasi-monopoly aims – fairly high prices and very high profits based on a limited output. If to some extent it gets its own way as to wages and conditions, is Labour prepared to fit into that pattern?

If the post-war future is planned on these lines, 'they' will control all that matters. As before, and even more absolutely than before, 'they' will govern our economic life, and in all essentials both the leading parties will, consciously or unconsciously, realise their aims. Parliament will, no doubt, do a little, dodging all the fundamentals, for town and country planning, education, and such neglected trades as catering. But when it comes to the Beveridge Report, what are we to expect? It is popular with the workers: the middle class as a whole approves it: it may conceivably pass pretty much as it stands. But Sir William Beveridge has himself warned us that it rests on two conditions, (1) the maintenance of the national income by high production in industry, and (2) full employment. If these are not realised, the scheme is unworkable and would soon be bankrupt. But does anyone seriously believe that Big Business is going to break with its own past by planning for plenty? And who is going to 'control' it into doing what it does not mean to do? 'They' have no such intention, and 'they' are quite capable of coming to terms with Labour.

When we turn to international affairs, the case is a good deal worse. In this field 'they' have good and early information, and the direct interests of limited groups of them prompt them to use their pressure on

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Departments staffed with their own men. The diffused humanitarian sympathies of the rest of us are no match for 'them'. We recollect that 'they,' in the persons of the FBI, had negotiated a treaty of commericial alliance with the Nazi 'them', which was upset by the march into Prague on the following day. 'They' are, if anything, even more powerful under the American democratic facade. The State Department does what 'they' would have it do. It smooths the path of the Darlans, the Peyroutons, Otto of Austria, and Franco of Spain, while it cold-shoulders the Soviet Union.

We have tried to answer Sir Stafford's question. Here 'they' are and they are not a myth. It is not 'defeatism' to recognise their power – qualified though it happily still is among us by a fairly secure system of civil rights and free speech. What is 'defeatism' is to rest content with this pluto-democracy. In a few lines it is not easy to sketch a positive policy that might gradually achieve a transfer of power from 'them' to 'us'. Every improvement in education, including adult education, and a more liberal BBC, would help, albeit slowly. Our parliamentary system needs drastic reform, and our representative system, with its vast, unwieldy territorial units, is out of date. It ought to start in factories, villages and neighbourhood groups with much smaller units, composed of men and women who habitually work together for a common social end. We can imagine, though we do not expect, a change in the constitutional structure of the Labour Party, which would alter the balance of power within it, in favour of the active men and women in the constituencies who do its work and keep some rays of faith alive. Little can be done in the villages till their workers are delivered from fear by strong Trade Unions and the public ownership of their cottages. Again, we think it essential that some independent organisation, of which Commonwealth may be an embryo, should represent such groups as the technicians, the teachers and the less fashionable doctors, whom 'they' at present lure into their following. But an independent Socialist Party of this type would have no future and might merely split the progressive ranks, unless the too jealous Labour Party would co-operate with it. Finally, we want to see a single Socialist International, which means that Transport House must learn to treat German Socialists as equals and comrades, and that Communists must follow an international rather than a purely Russian line of policy. This is not 'defeatism,' but it may be 'wishful thinking' – the name cynics give to faith.

If in some such ways we could create our instrument, how would it set to work to undermine the anti-social power of property – to depose 'them'? At the moment and for years to come, the keys lie with the wartime controls. If from the Ministers downwards they are left to the nominees of Big Business, our fate is settled. The old formula of nationalisation may have been too sweeping and too simple: in any case it was a means and not the end. The end is to assure the control of the whole community over our economic life. But control may have to include in key services at least the public ownership of the majority of shares, or the limitation of profits to a modest fixed interest. The real control, if not full public ownership, of land, rural and urban, is essential, and so is the direction of the flow of investment to serve social ends within a plan of development. Finally, we have to face the social problem of large-scale industry. We oppose, and even fight Fascists, because we rightly think the Führer principle a degradation of self-respecting humanity. Yet in our daily lives, nine in ten of us have to work in factories, mines or offices governed on this principle. The owner-manager or director-manager is merely a Führer. The effort to check his arbitary will by Trade Union methods results in struggle or in an unstable balance of power; but it cannot turn the factory into a true society, where all work for a common end. If we could solve these problems we should come near democracy. While we shirk them, we risk a lapse into Fascism, which overtakes the thoughtless mass when it discovers that political democracy is a disappointment, because 'they' run it.

Noel Brailsford (1873-1958) came to the New Statesman *via the* Nation *merger, and was chief leader-writer until 1946. He fought for the Greeks against the Turks in 1897: his books were as varied as* The War of Steel and Gold *and* Shelley, Godwin and their Circle.

THE PROBLEMS Brailsford identified remain with us today. Something, though insufficient, has been done about the financial bias of our politics, and the Lords' veto is not the instrument it used to be. Our civil rights, and our liberty of speech, remain 'fairly secure', in spite of numerous and vigilant enemies.

But the poverty of official Labour thought, and the transparent failure of the 'old formula of nationalisation' – here are the outlines of our present condition. Brailsford's list of abuses is another among many pieces of evidence concerning British society's extraordinary resistance to change: its capacity to recycle the same agenda time and again, to discuss it each time as a revolutionary proposal, and to do on each occasion precisely nothing about it. The capacity is as well represented in technology and in literature as in the mainstream of politics. Indeed, it has been much admired by a certain class of sophist. One may doubt, though, whether it makes a survival-trait in a world where the rate of change is accelerating.

The realisation of how little progress has been made under our Butskellite, Anglo-American post-war consensus affects different temperaments in different ways. To some, it is evidence of the impossibility of change, and therefore of the need to accept in this country conservation only minimally adjusted (there is a related theory of 'graceful decadence'). To others it is evidence that no change is possible short of millennial cataclysm: a position which meanwhile absolves its holders from any allegiance to the existing institutions of an imperfect democracy.

Neither temperament is well-suited to the necessary politics of the Left. Each, in its different way, says that it will not work in the hope of progress until fed upon a rich diet of optimism. The failures of the British Left, since the great prospects of the forties, are due to these temperamental afflictions, which lead to the absurd idea that it might (or should) be easy to alter the fabric of an ancient polity. (Notoriously, we lacked any salutary dash of Marxist scepticism.) From this again proceeds the chief operational handicap of the Left: an immense ignorance about the structure of the fortifications which are imagined as collapsing before its trumpet-calls.

Brailsford's approach, it may be seen, was not of this sort. He was interested in the complexities underlying the façade of the world. Today, the task of analysis has become harder again – among many factors there is the intense complexity and mathematisation of economics, always the core-discipline of socialism. But we are disposed to think that much can be done, provided only that our allies will face up in detail to the odds against *anything* being done.

The fact that such a temperament is well-enough rooted in our national tradition – requiring nothing more than fresh cultivation – may be shown by a document roughly contemporary with Brailsford's leader. This is one of the letters of the poet Keith Douglas (killed, the next year, in Normandy) and its tone may be usefully set against some of the political and literary posturings visible lately in the public media:

> Your talk of regrouping sounds to me . . . like the military excuse of a defeated general. There is never much need to re-group. Let your impulses drive you forward; never lose contact with life or you will lose the impulses as well. Meanwhile, if you must re-group, do it by re-reading your old stuff . . .
>
> To be sentimental or emotional now is dangerous to oneself and to others. To . . . admit any hope of a better world is criminally foolish, *as foolish as it is to stop working for it* (emphasis added). It sounds silly to say work without hope, but it can be done; it's only a form of insurance; it doesn't mean work hopelessly.

Our radical commitment will have to meet some new and intricate challenges in the 1980s. It is useful to remember the real strength of their roots.

Bruce Page

This England – then and now

An unfailing barometer to the state of English thinking and behaviour is provided by the This England column. Before printing a bumper crop of current entries (overleaf), we reproduce a few from 1943:

☐ Wealth is indicated neither by capital nor income, but by the amount the individual spends – the millionaire is no better off than the bank clerk if he only spends £500 a year. – *Daily Telegraph*

☐ Princess Elizabeth, it was disclosed last night, rode to hounds for the first time. The decision to allow her to ride to hounds is in accord with the general policy of making her life as 'normal' as possible in the light of her position as heiress-apparent. – *Daily Mail*

☐ I am in full agreement with Commander Campbell. What the listening public requires is amusement and common sense. Please leave out religion and politics. – Letter in *News Chronicle*

☐ It is to be deplored that the Archbishop of Canterbury in his recent speeches should dwell so much on usury, finance and economics, all very difficult subjects that do not interest the working man. The Church will suffer from all this controversy. – Letter in *Daily Telegraph*

☐ A change of name for the Conservative Party to a title 'more suggestive of bold and progressive thinking' will be discussed at the Federation of University Conservative Associations conference in London next week. – *News Chronicle*

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And now, back to what might loosely be called the present . . .

□ To mark the return of *The Times* the 180 pupils at Stoneygate, a private school in Leicester, are to have a half-holiday on Saturday. The Rev Joe Josephs, the headmaster, said its reappearance was the most exciting event since the Spanish Armada. – *The Times* (Russell Holmes)

□ Prior to the second world war our children were taught that it was impolite to discuss politics and religion in company in case it gave offence to others. Unfortunately this is no longer the case and one has only to look around at the world to see the consequences. Letter in *Halifax Evening Courier* (Paul Temperton)

□ Hard labour at detention centres brings back memories of National Service to many older men. – *Daily Telegraph* (Brendan Pender)

□ Mrs Dorothy Culley yesterday received a 20 per cent rise from Yorkshire Electricity Board in the annual dues the board pays to her for allowing it to hang cables over her front garden. For the past ten years, a cheque for 2½p has arrived in the post for Mrs Culley, a pensioner, of Low Street, Winterton near Scunthorpe. Then she suggested to the board that 2½p did not go far these days. So this year the board has sent her a cheque for 3p. – *Guardian* (Mrs M. E. Barker)

□ A second hand car dealer who had stolen 17 cars and sold them by auction after changing their number plates, engine and chassis numbers, was a taxable person making taxable supplies in the course of his business within the meaning of section 2(2) of the Finance Act, 1972, for the purposes of VAT assessement, Mr Justice Griffiths said in the Queen's Bench Division. – *The Times* (Richard Wildman)

□ On the vetting of the jury, the judge said: 'One has heard criticism of jury vetting as amounting to the abandonment of the random selection of juries. What nonsense! It widens the random selection instead of being limited to the first twelve.' – *The Times* (Ben Whitaker)

□ The British Institue of Management has announced the cancellation of its annual conference because of a 'lack of major issues to discuss.' – *Labour Weekly* (Marylin Pound)

□ Lord Butler, stooping a little at 77, came out of the shadows. 'You'd like a little whisky?' he said. 'My wife's not here and she said I mustn't make tea. I've never really got the hang of boiling a kettle.' – *Sunday Times* (B. E. Bubb)

□ They agreed that parents and prospective parents should feel welcome at a good school and should be able to talk to the children. 'Mind you' said Mr Rae, 'we're very careful which boys we allow the parents to talk to. Some get sent on a cross country run.' – *Guardian* (A. B. Knight)

□ A suggestion from the audience that habitual or professional shoplifters could be identified by identikit pictures in a public place was not supported. 'Personally, I feel they should be branded right between the eyes,' said Chief Supt Maurice Jackman, Woking's police chief. – *Woking News and Mail* (Alison Millard)

□ Cars should come before people, a Redbridge councillor claimed last week. Counciller Nancy Thurgood told Highways Committee members it would be 'a waste of traffic time' to arrange for more time for pedestrians to cross at pelican crossings. – *Redbridge Guardian and Independent* (U. Johnson)

□ Members of the public thinking of buying gold bars may not find the process as easy as it may seem. – *Financial Times* (Badalia Herodsfoot)

STUFFING

Tiny Tim & the lethal turkey

HANNAH WRIGHT finds delicious pathways through the Christmas poultry jungle

Yes! The bedpost was his own. The bed was his own, the room was his own. Best and happiest of all, the Time before him was his own to make amends!

Charles Dickens: A Christmas Carol

MR EBENEZER SCROOGE whooped and frisked into the sitting room and dialled the home number of a Leadenhall Market poulterer who owed him money. Yes, there was a large turkey still unsold. He had put it in the chiller overnight, and would send it by minicab immediately to Camden Town.

When the turkey, twice the size of Tiny Tim, arrived at their council flat, Bob Cratchit and his wife could hardly believe their eyes or their good fortune. Mrs Cratchit felt quite nervous at the thought of having to cook such a vast bird, but luckily she remembered the instructions for the safe preparation of turkeys circulated by the Department of Health to the medical school canteen where she washed up. Do not stuff; ensure the bird is properly defrosted; allow a minimum cooking time of 3½ hours for a 20 lb. turkey at 350 degrees Fahrenheit; do not reheat was the gist of their recommendations. The instructions didn't explain why you shouldn't stuff the turkey and Mrs Cratchit had never heard of anyone not stuffing a turkey for Christmas so she stuffed this one from neck to parson's nose with the succulent sage and onion she had already prepared – thinking to herself that she would give the bird, which was very cold, an extra half hour of cooking time.

Four hours later the bird looked wonderfully crisp and golden. With great pride and care Mrs Cratchit dished it up along with all its accompaniments. What a feast they had. The breast meat was tender and juicy and they didn't get anywhere near finishing it. After dinner Mrs Cratchit covered the turkey with transparent film but couldn't fit it into their small fridge and was forced to leave it out on the counter in the warm kitchen.

During the night Tiny Tim had a slight attack of sickness and diarrhoea but then his crippled little frame was unused to rich meals.

The turkey also spent a restless night. The heat which had so crisply browned the skin had not penetrated into the deep muscle of its thighs nor through the densely stuffed body cavity. At the bottom of this cavity there was a pool of warm bloody juice in which there lurked *Salmonella hadar* and *E coli*, fugitives from the turkey's bowel, which had split during gutting.

These two bacteria felt very nicely thank you in their warm nutritious bath and began to celebrate Christmas their way. Every twenty minutes or so each one split and became two. Eight hours later when dawn struggled through the one-way system of Camden Town, there were 16,777,216 bacteria for every one that had been there the night before.

THE NEXT day Mrs Cratchit prepared a nice turkey salad for her family. When Bob Cratchit returned home that evening, full of joy at Mr Scrooge's miraculous change of heart and his own big pay rise, he found his family queasy, shivery and sorry for themselves. Tiny Tim was distinctly ill. Still, some of them managed to eat another piece of turkey and stuffing for supper, though as you got further in Mrs Cratchit realised that it wasn't properly cooked at all.

That night the millions of bacteria frisked and whooped in the stomachs of the Cratchits. There were queues outside the lavatory. Washing-up bowls and chamber pots were used many times.

In the morning Tiny Tim was white, drawn and semi-conscious. An ambulance took him to the hospital. By the evening of the next day the rest of the family had more or less recovered, and that biological bomb of a turkey was in the dustbin. A few days later, however, Mrs Cratchit found that she had developed a remarkably persistent strain of cystitis, which took weeks and several visits to the outpatients to clear up. Tiny Tim had become severely dehydrated and was very ill.

Still, he did not die.

Mr Ebenezer Scrooge was deeply distressed by the near-catastrophe his well-intentioned gift had caused, and a few days later he told Bob to stop scratching with that darn quill and get on the blower to find out why the food poisoning had occurred. First Bob rang the Department of Health who said that their instructions had been circulated to hospitals, institutions and canteens for the last two years and there had never been any complaints before. They also said that over a quarter of all the food poisoning outbreaks last year came from turkeys, the largest single category. These outbreaks were now quite rare in private houses. They happened mainly in large kitchens because of the bad practices among the staff.

The next day Mrs Cratchit told Miss I. Mazatelli, the head cook at her canteen, what had happened. The cook snorted that the instructions were a waste of time because any fool knew that even an unstuffed turkey takes at least 5 hours to cook if it weighs 20 pounds, while a stuffed one takes up to 8 hours of slow careful cooking. She also said that the person who wrote the instructions saying do not stuff and do not reheat without explanation didn't know much about human psychology and still less about trying to dish up 150 hot Christmas dinners at once. If they wanted to put out useful instructions they would have to be both more accurate and more practical.

Hannah Wright has been chef of food guide restaurants in London and Sydney; she has taught nutrition to the able-bodied and the handicapped and is writing a book on soups.

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BOB NEXT phoned Dr N. D. Noah of the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Centre, who said that during the last four years *Salmonella hadar* had become very widespread in the turkey population, being transferred by dust, faeces and drinking water from one generation to the next. The greatest danger lay with very large turkeys especially if they had been frozen, for by the time the thick part of the muscle was fully defrosted, the exposed part of the bird might be a bit off. He said he would prefer stuffing not to be used, but if it was it should be very lightly packed so as to allow good heat conduction to the centre cavity of the bird where the *Salmonella* collected.

Bob discovered that Dr Noah had written a letter to the *British Medical Journal* in 1975, which contained practical and common sense advice on the cooking of turkeys which could be condensed into a far better circular for the Department of Health.

Dr Alan Linton, Senior Lecturer in Veterinary Biology at Bristol Medical School thought that the minimum recommended cooking time was obviously much too short, though the surface bacteria would have been killed in an unstuffed turkey. He also provided an explanation for Mrs Cratchit's tenacious cystitis.

Nearly all commercially slaughtered birds are contaminated during gutting with the contents of their own bowels, and many of these bacteria will be antibiotic-resistant. In order to stop outbreaks of disease in the giant hangars in which the turkeys are reared by the thousand, many turkey farmers add antibiotics to the feed or water at various stages of the turkeys' developments so that their intestinal bacteria (*E coli*) build up a resistance to such human-used antibiotics as tetracyclin, and streptomycin.

Dr Linton said that in one experiment 22 different sero types of antibiotic-resistant bacteria had been found in one chicken, and that this resistance could be passed on to people who merely *handled* the raw bird. When the turkey *E coli* get into the human alimentary canal they transfer their resistance to their human *E coli* buddies. Then if Mrs Cratchit wipes her bum in the wrong direction she gets antibiotic-resistant cystitis. Dr Linton said that while the resistance that humans got from poultry wasn't so worrying as the far greater resistance they gave themselves through unnecessary prescriptions, nonetheless antibiotics were greatly used in poultry farming. The problem was compounded by vets often having a single large employer. As a result they couldn't call their prescription pads their own.

HORRIFIED by the near escape from death of his beloved little son, Bob next rang the Vegetarian Society. Dr Alan Long confirmed everything that Drs Noah and Linton had said, and added that *Listeria* bacteria, which can cause serious or fatal disease to handlers as well as eaters, had been found in 10 of 68 poultry tested. *Campylobacter*, which also causes food poisoning, had been found in 1 in 7 birds, and *Salmonella* in 1 in 3. He said that Dr John Scully, Community Physician for Mid-Staffordshire, said that all poultry should have a health warning stamped on the wrapper in the same way as on a packet of cigarettes. In connection with the vets' block prescription of antibiotics for a thousand birds at a time, he quoted from *Farmers' Weekly*

which, in commenting on the Swan Committee's attempt to tighten up on the use of medicines by farmers, said: 'It is difficult to assess how much impact will be felt at farm level. It will probably depend on how well farmers know their vets.'

For quite a few months after that fateful Christmas, neither Mr Scrooge nor the Cratchits ate any poultry, but by the following Christmas, things had to a certain extent returned to normal. Mr Scrooge had been so disgusted by the idea of swallowing antibiotics with his turkey that he ordered his Christmas bird from the Wholefood Butchery in Paddington Street W1. Miss Lilian Schofield said that her secret turkey supplier got his own more expensive turkey food especially mixed without fishmeal and considered that well-managed turkeys needed no medication.

His turkeys get a run in the field on fine days and take a month longer to develop because they are not given growth antibiotics. (These growth antibiotics, which are not used in human medicine, are accepted by Marks and Spencer who, to their credit, will not take a turkey treated with human-use antibiotics or other medicines.) Miss Schofield's supplier could not guarantee that the turkeys were *Salmonella*-free but then nor could anyone else. So Scrooge decided to risk it.

On Boxing Day he roasted it long and slowly, and served it, with separately roasted balls of cashew nut, lemon and herb stuffing, to a large party of friends and employees. He thought it was worth every penny of its £1.20 per pound. On the way home Mrs Cratchit admitted that it had tasted better than their Sainsbury's frozen turkey at 52p per pound, which had smelt a little fishy and tasted rather stringy and flavourless. Bob said that the extra bit of flavour in Scrooge's turkey wasn't worth 68p per pound.

Young Martha and Tiny Tim had become vegetarians after their experience. In fact Tiny Tim's compassionate heart would not allow him to eat any animal products at all, so he made himself a Brazil nut, sesame and tomato loaf with mushroom sauce, which was very simple and delicious, and followed it with suetless mince pies and rum and peanut butter sauce.

Martha was a laxer vegetarian and she made herself a Christmas dinner of chestnut paté in a pastry crust with cranberry sauce. Inspired by the Vegetarian Society's Christmas Menus, she and Tiny Tim shared steamed Brussels sprouts, glazed parsnips, baked potatoes and a chicory, orange and walnut salad, followed by a Christmas pudding ice for herself.

PETER CRATCHIT had suffered least from the *Salmonella* poisoning and thought all this vegetarianism was a load of old codswallop. He ate two helpings of roast turkey, sausage-meat stuffing, baked ham, potatoes, roast in dripping with a couple of parsnips, but no sprouts or salad. Then he ate a lot of plum pudding and brandy butter, and some chocolates afterwards.

Christmas dinner was not the joyous occasion it had been the previous year. Martha and Tiny Tim kept pointing out to Peter that the salt in his ham would harden his arteries and give him high blood pressure. The nitrates and nitrites which turned it pink would turn into carcinogenic nitrosamines in his stomach – and that although turkey meat was exceptionally low in saturated fat, the pork stuffing, the ham fat, the roast potatoes, the suet in his pudding and, in particular, the brandy butter all got between 30 and 50 per cent of their calories from saturated fat, which was even now forming little lumps of cholesterol in his arteries and would finally stop his heart functioning. Furthermore the sugar in the pudding, the brandy butter and the chocolates would rot his teeth. And as if that wasn't enough, the meal was lacking in vegetable and cereal fibre, and if he kept on eating like that he would end up with constipation and diverticulosis. Peter said that girls always liked rabbit food and that Tiny Tim was a spoilt little pansy and that real men enjoyed plenty of meat and some sweets. He just wanted to eat normally like everyone else.

ALAS, Peter Cratchit died of a coronary in his late forties, along with many other men of his generation, all of whom were eating 'normally'. But the future was a rosy one for the rest of our characters (though Bob and Mrs Cratchit spent the rest of their days eating very overcooked meat). Mr Scrooge became an obsessive wholefood gourmet. He gave up eating fatty over-refined and preserved food in cheap taverns, and quite lost his nipped nose, shrivelled cheek, thin blue lips and red eyes.

Indeed he became quite a handsome old fellow, whose only fault was a tendency to prose on interminably about the merits of his *Salmonella*-free hens. Martha gave up vegeterianism after she married, but was always a conscientious label-reading consumer who tried hard not to give her children meat containing antibiotics or hormones or much sweet, refined, or fatty food.

Tiny Tim never lost the interest in nutrition, and the hatred of factory farming instilled in him so traumatically at such a tender age. When he grew up, having literary leanings, he became the food columnist of the NEW STATESMAN. Apparently they'd had to fire the person before, who kept trying to write Dickensian spoofs.

Just out:
The MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP's new Report No 8:
'INEQUALITIES IN ZIMBABWE'
by Christopher Hitchens
price 75p (plus 25p p&p) from:
MRG, 36 Craven St., London WC2, or good bookshops.

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Ayatollah's Christmas Message

DAVID CAUTE

Who is the most maligned and vilified of the world's great spiritual leaders? It is the great and wise Imam of Iran, the Ayatollah Khomeini – victim of cheap, hysterical sneers and slanders peddled in the Western press.

One must lament that even in the pages of this journal (30 November) an anonymous editorialist (may his tongue be torn from his mouth!) described the wise mullah's policies as 'manifestly disastrous for Iran' (may his hands be chopped off!) and referred to the Ayatollah's 'medieval ignorance of economic affairs, his authoritarian morality and his narrow chauvinism . . .' (May this merchant of hate suffer 100 lashes upon his naked buttocks and may his testicles be fed to the pigs!)

It is no small scandal that the Western population remains abysmally ignorant of the Ayatollah's great writings, the finest testament to his wisdom: *Valayete Faghih* (The Kingdom of the Doctrine), *Kachfol-Asrar* (The Key of Mysteries), and *Towzihol Masa'el* (The Explanation of Problems). All these were written during the long, bitter years of exile when Iran groaned under the alien tyranny of the Shah and his torture squads, the SAVAK. (May his cancerous entrails be fed to the camels!)

Fortunately the NEW STATESMAN – despite the grave error mentioned above, for which we offer our eyeballs to Allah – was recently privileged to be granted an exclusive, indeed unique, interview with Khomeini in the Holy City of Qom (correctly pronounced, like the famous Moscow department store, Gum). The Ayatollah, who received us in a long, dark and cool chamber, was thoughtfully caressing the polished skull of an executed Kurdish chief.

'This man was a Turd', he told us with his characteristic lisp.

Interview follows:

NS: *Ayatollah, do you believe in a minimum wage?*

KHOMEINI: That which is not expressly permitted is forbidden. There will be no more radio music, believe me, for if young boys and girls in the full flood of puberty, their bodies afire with fertility, shall be denied carnal knowledge of each other, then why permit Western music and blue jeans designed to emphasise crotch and bum and so inflame the lusts of these same young people? If women in your society wore the chador you would not suffer constant riots and insurrections.

NS: *Will you increase expenditure on the arts?*

KHOMEINI: My enemies are those who wage war on God . . . in particular the Americans, the Turds, the Jews, the Egyptians, the Russians, and the Christian infidels. The Jews and their allies are at this moment plotting to rule a Judaised world, just as the Sunni heretics are plotting to subvert the unity of Islam.

NS: *Tell us about pensions and welfare benefits in Iran.*

KHOMEINI: The political thought of the West draws a false distinction between democracy and authority. Islamic government can be only constitutional and democratic. In our democracy, however, the laws do not depend on the will of the people but on the Koran itself and the Sunna (tradition, *ed.)* of the Prophet. Thus the Islamic republican democratic form of government is the government of divine right, of absolute authority.

NS: *What about freedom of the press, Ayatollah?*

KHOMEINI: Do we wish to impose our Islamic Republic on the enemies of God? No. It is the Western countries which impose their ways on us including their music, blue jeans, bums, crotches, and false medicines. In the face of such a challenge we cannot forget the message of the Prophet, his call to Jihad (Holy War, *ed.*), meaning the conquest of the non-Moslem lands. The 15th century of the Hegira Calendar of Islam heralds the time when the Koran, the Civil Code of the Prophet's Three Laws, shall be obeyed across the world.

NS: *Are you hoping to abolish all forms of censorship?*

KHOMEINI: We need no lessons in justice from those nations which equate justice with compromise and capitulation – in short, with injustice. One must punish crimes by the law of retaliation, cut off the hand of the thief, whip the adulterous woman . . . For the drinking of alcohol, Satan's brew, 100 lashes! For the smoking of tobacco, Satan's weed, 100 lashes! For the wearing of amulets, practice of magic, hearing of music, following of false processions and visiting of tombs – 100 lashes!

NS: *Ayatollah, may we expect a Freedom of Information Act in Iran in the near future?*

KHOMEINI: The laws governing the bodily functions must above all be strictly observed: how to urinate, defecate, copulate and menstruate.

NS: *What proportion of the working class in Iran belongs to trade unions?*

KHOMEINI: At the moment of doing one's business it is imperative to squat in such a way as neither to face Mecca nor point one's bum at it. The urinary orifice should be washed once, with water, after the act; but those whose urine comes out by some other orifice should wash this other orifice twice. But if you forget – it doesn't matter. Say extra prayers.

NS: *Is the right to strike protected?*

KHOMEINI: The faithful should urinate before going to bed, before coitus, and after ejaculation. When crouching to urinate, the weight should always be on the left foot.

NS: *What is your view of the UN?*

KHOMEINI: Now, if a leaf of the Koran, or some piece of paper carrying the name of the Prophet or of one of the Imams falls into the pan, it is absolutely indispensable to retrieve it at all costs even if this entails expenses. In cases where all efforts fail, the WC should be abandoned until one is sure the Holy paper has dissolved. But if one merely forgets, it doesn't matter. It's OK.

NS: *Perhaps we should turn to the relations between the sexes?*

KHOMEINI: A man who has ejaculated after coitus with a woman who is not his wife, and who ejaculates again after coitus with his legitimate wife, does not have the right to say his prayers if he is still sweating from exertion. *But* if he first has coitus with his legitimate wife and only afterwards coitus with his illegitimate wife, then he can say his prayers.

NS: *Are you in favour of abortion on demand?*

KHOMEINI: But if it is dark and he is not sure which is his lawful wife and which the other . . . then it doesn't matter. It's OK. And if a man commits adultery with a woman whom he knows is not his wife, whereas she, the woman, does not know that the man is not her husband . . .

NS: *Ayatollah, do you favour global disarmament?*

KHOMEINI: Then the woman must wait 100 days before remarrying. Now: a man who has had sexual relations with his wife between her periods and then divorces her and later discovers she was pregnant when he divorced her . . . that divorce is not valid. In the West it is falsely said that Islam allows a man to divorce a woman purely according to his will. This is not so: at the moment of divorce the woman must not be having her period and the man must not have had sexual relations with her since her last period.

NS: *We in the West have been guilty of imposing our own cultural norms and paradigms on the rest of the world . . .*

KHOMEINI: Our laws are strict. For example: a man may not marry his wife's mother or grandmother even if his marriage has not been consummated. Similarly, once you have had sexual relations with a wife, you cannot marry her daughters by previous marriages.

NS: *Are you committed to the Non-Aligned camp?*

KHOMEINI: A man who commits adultery with his aunt ought not to marry her daughters. But if a man who has married his cousin commits adultery with her mother, the marriage is not annulled. It is valid. Now: a father or paternal grandfather has the right to marry off a child who has not reached the age of puberty, or who is mad; once the child reaches the age of puberty or recovers its reason it cannot annul the marriage unless the marriage does it a manifest wrong.

NS: *Have you banned exports of oil to South Africa?*

KHOMEINI: If the husband is crazy, impotent or without testicles the wife has been wronged. If the wife annuls the marriage because of her husband's inability to accomplish the sexual act via the vagina or the rectum, he ought to pay her damages equal to half her dowry. But a temporary wife, even if pregnant, does not have the right to demand anything of her husband.

NS: *What is your opinion of nursery schools?*

KHOMEINI: A Moslem woman may not marry a non-Moslem man. A Moslem man may not take a non-Moslem woman in a continuous marriage, but he may contract a temporary marriage for 10 days or a month with a Christian or Jewish woman. Similarly, if young men and women find themselves forced

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See two works recently published in France, *from which all quotations in this 'interview' are taken*: **Principes politiques, philosophiques sociaux et religieux de l'Ayatollah Khomeiny** *Editions libres Hallier* F.19.85; and **Pour un Gouvernement Islamique** by AYATOLLAH SEYYED RUHOLLAH KHOMEYNI (sic) *Fayolle* F.36.

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to study in class side-by-side, they may relieve the shame of their situation by contracting temporary marriages.

NS: *Do you favour comprehensive education?*

KHOMEINI: Now: if a man sodomises the son, brother or father of his wife *after* his marriage, the marriage remains valid. But if he sodomises his neighbour's camel, oxen or sheep, then the beast becomes contaminated and must be killed and burnt.

NS: *What steps are you taking, Ayatollah, to curb inflation?*

KHOMEINI: It is not forbidden to photograph a woman other than one's own but if photographing her leads to touching her one must not photograph her. Similarly, if a man or woman, in giving medical help, is forced to look at a person's genitals, they must do so indirectly, in a mirror . . . unless it can't be helped. In washing the body of a corpse, one must never set eyes on the genitals, or touch them. That is a capital sin.

NS: *Perhaps we could turn to other aspects of social life . . .*

KHOMEINI: If a man or woman, in giving medical help, is forced to look at a person's genitals . . .

NS: *We think you have already discussed that. Now, child care, for example . . .*

KHOMEINI: If a man commits adultery with an unmarried woman then marries her, the child born after the marriage is a bastard if the parents are not sure of having conceived it since the marriage.

NS: *What of scientific education?*

KHOMEINI: A woman is in a state of pseudo-menstruation when the blood flows from her vagina outside the proper time of her period. If the blood does not completely impregnate a piece of cotton wool introduced into the vagina, she has a weak pseudo-menstruation; if the blood soaks the cotton wool but without soiling the material placed on the vulva, she has a medium pseudo-menstruation; but . . .

NS: *If the blood sweeps away the whole province, she's Eskimo Nell. When will you abolish private medicine in Iran?*

KHOMEINI: Women from the line of the Prophet attain the menopause at the age of 60; all other women at 50. The blood flowing from the vagina of a woman under nine years of age or over 60 ought not to be considered menstrual blood.

NS: *Perhaps we could turn to the subsidised theatre . . .*

KHOMEINI: If a man notices during coitus that his wife has just begun to have her period, he ought to withdraw. If he doesn't withdraw, he ought to give a charitable donation to the poor. Or ask God's pardon. And now I speak of Ramadan, of the period of abstinence. Coitus is incompatible with the vow of abstinence. But if the penis does not penetrate the vagina as far as the circumcision ring and there is no ejaculation then the period of abstinence remains valid. If the man cannot be sure how far his penis penetrated the vagina . . . it's OK. It's also OK if the man has coitus because he has forgotten his vow of abstinence. Now: if during the period of abstinence he masturbates to the point of ejaculation, then the abstinence is violated. On the other hand, if he ejaculates involuntarily, without helping himself along, it's OK.

NS: *As regards legal aid for the poor . . .*

KHOMEINI: The period of abstinence is cancelled if one plunges the entire head into water, but it is permissible to plunge the right half, then the left half. If you plunge the entire head under water to save someone from drowning . . . the abstinence is violated. Of course no eating is permitted. If a fly enters your mouth and does not go down your throat, you must pull it out even if this precipitates vomiting which annuls the fasting.

NS: *Turning now to the problem of Iran's national minorities . . .*

KHOMEINI: Children should be breast-fed for two full years. You cannot marry the wet-nurse who breast-fed you or your wife when your wife was a baby. Nor can a man marry a woman who was breast-fed by his own mother or grandmother. A wet-nurse should always be a Shi'ite Moslem who believes in the Twelve Imams and looks beautiful.

NS: *Do you plan a rapid expansion of sporting facilities in Iran?*

KHOMEINI: Death comes to us all and faster to those who wage war on God. He who has not washed himself after touching the body of a cold corpse is permitted to go to the mosque, read the Koran and have coitus. However, he is not authorised to say his daily prayers. When a man is dying he should not be left alone, nothing heavy should be placed on his stomach and he should not be approached by a man who has recently ejaculated or a woman with a period. If a non-Moslem woman dies and carries a dead child inside her, and if the father of the child is a Moslem, then the body of the woman should be turned on its left side and away from Mecca so that the face of the child shall be turned towards Mecca.

NS: *In your opinion, is Iran over-dependent on its oil industry?*

KHOMEINI: What is pure and what is impure? Eleven things are impure: urine, excrement, sperm, bones of the dead, blood, dog meat, pork, non-Moslems, wine, beer and the sweat of a camel which eats excrement. Also impure is any person who believes in the Holy Trinity. Impurity enters into all things including the hunting of beasts. If two men together are hunting the same game and only one of them is a Moslem, or if both are Moslems but only one invokes the name of God at the time of the kill, the flesh of the game becomes impure. Unless the other hunter merely forgot to invoke the name of God . . . in which case . . .

NS: *It's OK?*

KHOMEINI: It's OK.

NS: *Turning now to the needs of Iranian agriculture . . .*

KHOMEINI: Such is the risk of impurity that the body must be washed according to strict rules. There are two sorts of ablution: by stages, and 'integral'. In the case of washing by stages, one must first proclaim in a loud voice one's intention of washing; then wash head and neck, then the right half of the body, then the left half. The right half of one's sex ought to be washed with the right half of the body and the left half of one's sex with the left half of the body but actually it's more prudent to wash the whole of one's sex with each half of the body but if one suspects that some part has been left out one must begin again, in the case of the left half washing only the left half but if some part has not been washed on the right half then one must wash the whole body all over again . . .

(quite probably continued on p. 2001)

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Boots

A Zimbabwean short story by S. NYAMFUKUDZA

Someone has been screaming for the last half hour, I don't know in which cell, but the men in here just swallow hard and stare straight ahead. 'Sergeant Moses!' one of them mutters sadly and it is a startling sound; we all turn sharply and stare at him, almost resentfully, for although there has been no order not to talk, the strain of waiting our turns has forced silence upon us.

I want to start talking too, I want to tell them that even he, Moses, should remember Farmer 'Butsu' as well, because they called him that, way back then, 'Boots', for his habit of kicking the hell out of his labourers. He had become worse, I had been told on my return.

When he went past, it was usually on his ancient motorbike. It spluttered and let off sudden, irregular explosions as it bounced along, leaving a riot of panic-stricken hares, buck and other animals scattering through the startled wood. Smarting and torn by the bushes into which we had plunged, we watched him, rifle strapped to his back, the broad bush-hat with spotted leopard-skin band flattened back against the wind, riding through his domain. For that loud, passing moment, he was the only blemish to our sense of total freedom.

It was his farm, but we never felt we were intruding when we wandered through that part of it he did not use except for his rides. It must have been the usual five or so thousand acres, and he could not have been farming even a tenth of this.

We chose the remote northern reaches bordering on the mission school which itself had been converted from old farm buildings when the absentee English landlord sold out, and we built our little huts among the small hills out there. We made a proper job of it too, chopping down young trees, digging in the poles and tying them together with thick, bast rope. Only the roofing was makeshift – polythene sheets and small branches on the lath instead of grass which would have taken too much time. After patching up the walls with red antheap mud, we had two storm-proof huts and it had taken only a month, working at weekends and the odd, free mid-week afternoon.

It was best in those last two months of November and early December when the routine of attending class was abandoned. The approaching Grade Seven finals were supposed to have put the fear of God into all of us so that we could be relied on to work where and when we pleased. And God or no, people did read, in beds, up trees, down holes, in toilets, during the day, through the night, every time and every place. It was an epidemic one needed to get away from; one stumbled on readers as if a flood had swept through suddenly and stashed them away in the most secretive and irretrievable corners, clinging desperately to their book-rafts.

I don't know what the other three would say. I don't even know where they are now, or if – and in these horrible days anything is possible – they are still alive. Moses, that very same Moses, is down the corridor, roaring like an enraged bull. But although it didn't last, although with the coming of December we all left and parted for good, when I think of those brief summer months, I know I have not been quite as happy since.

If there is no drought, the rains come in November, when all the wild fruit is about to ripen. We raided the Duke of Edinburgh Award Project's hen house, but only sparingly, so they wouldn't wise up to the fact that it wasn't the vermin. Together with fresh maize stolen from the irrigated fields on the farm which we stored in burrows, we had a reasonably stocked squat.

Hunting for Klapper apples or loquat fruit among the hills in the afternoon heat, shirtless, we would feel the humid air suddenly become heavy with the dusty, suffocating smell of a tropical storm . . . Magically a clear blue sky will in half an hour be dark with grey and black storm clouds; a fierce wind will lash through the trees as if striving to pull them to the ground. The dank air becomes unbreathable, laden with dust, broken leaves and the smell of burnt grass from the late-winter veld fires, the churning clouds twisting and rippling in a wild, agonised war dance. A sudden splash of lightning transforms the ugly, frightening mass of clouds into bright-white tufts of rolling softness; then the crash of thunder cancels everything into a fearful thud of terror, which gives way to a series of mocking rumbles. And then the roar of the storm, sweeping through the trees. After the first stinging drops, we would retreat from the whipping rain into the sanctuary of our huts.

In half an hour the storm has subsided into a gentle, friendly shower and distant mutters of thunder. Patches of blue sky appear as the thinned clouds are hurried away by the dying wind. Another half hour, and the sun is shining, the air smells crisp and fresh and the crickets begin to sing. The songs of birds coming back to life after the storm seem to reach out to deep into the washed forest for miles around . . .

Then one day, beginning with a shout, the idyll began to die. We had gone, all five of us, to pick loquat fruit felled by the rain. The game was to pull down a branch gently and call out to the others to come and see. If they came too near, if they were off their guard, a sudden leap aside, releasing the branch, would give them a heavy drenching.

'Hey boys! Come and see, come and see!' There was an edge of real panic in the voice and everybody else ran up. The boy was calling from the top of a split rock in the shade of a group of thorn trees.

'*Chiiko?* What is it? What's up there?' We all scrambled up. One of our rules at the camp was to confine ourselves to English to help us weave our tongues through the complexities of the language, but hell, there seemed to be something genuinely exciting up there!

'*Munhu!* Yes! I think it's a person!'

'What?' We crowded round, peering into the dark crack. Down there, between the two sides of the split, sticking out of a mound of wet, rotting leaves, were the greying bones of a foot. We looked at it in wonder for a while.

'Do you think it's a child then?'

'Uh uh, too big, a small man or woman, a grown-up.'

'Maybe it's all there, the whole body. Maybe it isn't human even! Yes! Maybe it's a baboon, caught in a trap!' He looked round at all of us. 'Don't you think so, boys? It can't be a real person, can it?'

'*Chimuti!* Get a long one, then we can use the stick to . . .'

'Hey, hey, hey, boys! I don't like it. We might pick up something bad from this place! I have heard . . .'

'Listen to him! You say you have seen dead bodies before, now you are scared of bones! Maybe it's just a baboon's leg, isn't that so, boys, that can't do us any harm.'

'Yes, yes!' We all bustled round looking for a long enough stick. Then we poked at it, flicking away the leaves and debris.

'Jesus Christ!' The leg was getting longer, and soon there was the end of the other one, twisted up under it. We stopped, but Moses, who had been against it to begin with, continued busily.

'Come on!' he said. We hung back and watched. The thing was wedged awkwardly and lay on its side, the pelvis and ribs which had fallen in and separated like large finger bones, appeared. He hesitated before going for the face, then he went on. The skull was crushed in and broken, teeth glaring in a hideous, discoloured smile. We ran from the place, back to the huts, leaving all the fruit we had collected and sat outside, pondering the event.

'Do you think he was murdered?' For some reason we assumed it had to be a man.

'Of course! Women or cards. Even medicines, magic; these people in farm compounds, the foreigners from the north, they play with magic all the time. Maybe he was even from this farm. They don't play with women who are unfaithful either, they really do them in.' Moses looked uncomfortably round at us; he had to specify that it must be people from the north as his father worked on a farm compound not far from the school. He was a local boy and in his presence we carefully avoided references to the mean, poverty-stricken existence farm workers led.

'Shall we report it?' That was a big one, it could mean trouble. Apart from our terror of the police, we could be in the soup for breaking bounds.

'Maybe it's been there for years.'

'Doesn't matter. Sometimes they catch murderers after ten years!'

'But if they had missed him, they would have looked for him and found him, with dogs and so on. Maybe he was a poacher and "Butsu" shot him. No boys, let's not!' Now that Moses had reminded us of Farmer 'Boots', the prospect of reporting the find became even more remote.

'But how would you like it if somebody found your body and ignored it. Maybe the man has got a wife, waiting and thinking he's coming back.'

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'Oh shut up,' Moses said, getting angry. 'You talk as if it's a person. It's just some rotting bones. If you want to get into trouble for that, just leave me out of it, leave the rest of us out, isn't that so, boys?'

We agreed and all swore that we'd keep the secret. We never ventured that way again, but the feeling that somebody was lying there behind us among the rocks, unknown and unthought of, never left us for long. He, it, always cropped up somehow in our conversations.

'I wouldn't want to vanish like that, no trace.'

'Vanish? Like what?'

'That man over there.'

'Oh shit! You are always bringing it up. How can we read with you going on like this? And who said he vanished? Somebody knows, somebody put him there.'

'I wonder if the person comes back to check, to see if it's well hidden still. People say a murderer keeps going back to the scene of his crime. Maybe the person even went mad. Isn't that what is meant by *Ngozi*, Moses? The spirit of the dead man will haunt and trouble the killer's life until he confesses or goes mad. If he dies without confessing, the children will suffer too, until they find out from a diviner and pay back some atonement to the dead person's relations.' That was the end of studying.

'Yes,' Moses said, 'but only if the man doesn't come from too far. Your ancestors become less able to protect you the further away you travel. If you went to England for instance, that would be too far, over all those seas.' He spoke with the confidence of an expert. He was born, bred, and would die in the country, he said; he was the one who knew all about the dark, mysterious old world of the spirits.

'What do you think, Marty?'

'Old wives' tales, like when we were told not to sit in the middle of the road because we would get boils on our buttocks. That was just to stop us being run over.'

'Do you think people can just die for nothing and that's the end of it then? Ah no! That would mean there is no value to human life, if you can just kill people like flies with no problems to follow.'

'What about wars then? You would have thousands of aggrieved and avenging spirits wandering about in the air all over Europe. Imagine all those wars in history, millions dead; how many crazy people would you have out there?'

'How do you know there aren't lots of them?' Moses countered.

'But sometimes you say these things don't work with white people!'

'They lock their crazies up so we never hear about them. You people who grew up in town don't know anything. You probably all think milk is manufactured in a bottling factory!' This argument, like most others, degenerated into gibes and insults and soon fizzled out, giving us a chance to read again.

A few minutes later, we heard dogs barking uncomfortably close by and hurried to our feet. Instinctively, we rushed into the huts, gathering shirts and books ready for flight. They emerged from the trees as we ran out, four white youths, also in their shorts and bare feet, the dogs growling and gambolling around us in menacing excitement. The boys looked our age, 13 or 14, and all held guns, pointed at us. Perhaps they were air-guns, but we were damn scared all the same.

'The cheeky little Kaffir bastards! What are you doing on my father's farm?' one of them shouted angrily. We automatically raised our arms sky high in the classic gesture of surrender. They prodded us with their guns, turning us round and examining us with loud distaste. The dogs growled and bared teeth as we huddled together.

'Did you niggers build these things, did you?' He jutted his jaw in the direction of the huts behind us, panting with rage. 'You nincompoops!' he cried with vexation when we nodded. We were terrified of the gun he waved in our faces so carelessly. He rushed inside and we heard him kicking things about. 'The little Kaffir bastards!' He cursed continually. He came out and glared at us with furious eyes.

'What shall we do with them? We'll take them in, OK? They are poachers, thieves. My father knows how to deal with their sort!' His companions tightened their grips on the guns and walked around us briskly, generating an air of grim resolution. The dogs looked and sounded angrier. It was disconcerting, feeling so weak-kneed and being treated like dangerous criminals liable to escape at any moment.

'Please!' I managed to say. 'You will get us into trouble . . .'

'Shut up! Did you chop down all the wood? Where did you get the maize you have been roasting?' he shouted.

'I brought it! I brought it from home!' He looked at Moses as if he had just sprung up out of the ground. Then he looked back at his companions and uttered a scornful laugh and they too began laughing.

'Oh, did you? What's your name, Kaffir?'

'Moses, Moses Chitema.' They found this funny and laughed uncontrollably.

'And you? What's yours?'

'Crispen, my name is Crispen Mutatu!' Moses looked at Godfrey, astonished.

'You? You? He's lying! Godfrey, that's his name!' he cried desperately.

'Ah! A clever one! Telling me lies are you?' He went after him, prodding him violently in the ribs with the barrel, watching him closely as he twisted and squirmed in pain. But that seemed to become quickly boring and he wondered what to do next. Our arms were now fit to drop off and felt like they weighed tons.

'OK, we'll have some fun! And don't you Kaffirs move even a finger!' He picked up our shirts with the gun and slung them into the huts, then threw the books in after them. Out of his pocket he took a box of matches and set the roofs alight.

'Please, baas! Our books, our uniforms! How are we going to . . .'

'Shut up, dammit! Trespassing, cutting down trees without permission, lighting fires, and a hundred other offences I can't name! You are in trouble! We are taking you in!' We watched the roofs burn and fall in on to our books and uniforms. But it turned out we were in no real trouble then; they got fed up with tormenting us and even the dogs had had enough and were prowling about in search of other interests.

'OK, little Kaffirs. I'm letting you off lightly this time.' He finally said, 'You've got 30 seconds to clear off the farm back to that, that compound of yours. And if you set foot here again, I promise you, your buttocks will be blown off! Now git!' We retreated backwards until it was safe to turn our backs on the dogs, then tore through the bushes like hares from a fire until we came to the fence.

'Moses, look what you made him do to me, I am going to make you pay today!' Godfrey said fiercely as soon as we had crawled through, advancing on him with his fists raised. Moses raised his own too, ready to fight back.

'No,' Marty said, 'leave him alone, he's just a farm boy. He's used to seeing his father kicked every day by white men, that's why he's scared to shit of them! Let him go on, on his own. We won't have a friend like that. Go on, go away!'

'OK,' he said, 'I don't care. You town boys never liked me anyway!'

He went. And we left him alone for sure. I never thought of him when I came back here. But I recognised him the moment we were brought in, standing there in his dark, heavy uniform and black boots. I could never mistake that face, though it must be ten, maybe 12 years since. I am sure he knew me too, yet the way he looked at me was frightening; there was a sudden gleam in his eyes, as if he quickly remembered something, then the eyes went cold and hard, and he walked away, shaking that big head of his.

Everyone has heard of him, he has made an ugly name for himself in these parts. Yet I never thought of him, the farm boy made good.

And the drums of water out there, immersion, suffocation, drowning, will I get out of here? They called him when we were bundled out of the truck, and he sauntered out of the doorway and looked us over, leaning against the bonnet of another police truck. 'Sergeant Moses,' someone whispered, but I knew him instantly. 'Are these the ones?' he asked contemptuously, as if unable to believe his eyes, walking among us, examining us one by one.

November is here again, and there might be a storm. I smell it in the air, it's so hot, clammy.

Someone has been screaming for the last half hour, and it's making me sick with fright. I would ask him, if I had the guts – 'How many of your people have you kicked to death, how many people have you left to rot out in the bush? Do you remember, Moses, how we ran, together, from the air guns of those young boys? Do you still believe in *Ngozi* now, Moses?'

It is out of the question. I have heard of his reputation. And this is hardly the time, is it? 'Boys' now means guerrillas; Moses is now a policeman; I am now *Mujiba*, collaborator, he called us that, imagine! So what does it matter that I did feed and help 'The Boys' who killed the white farmer when we'll all be made to confess anyway? I wish to start talking too, I wish to tell someone. I keep seeing those hideous discoloured teeth. A man has been screaming for the last half hour, I don't know in which cell. Unknown, unthought of, unmourned . . . I can't bear it, I need to talk to someone!

'MOSEES! YOU SHOULD REMEMBER BOOTS TOO! MOSEES!' They stare at me, they think I am mad, they shy away into the corner. 'He will remember! They called him "Boots". Even back then. I will talk to him! MOSEES! . . . SERGEANT MOSES! YOU SHOULD REMEMBER BOOTS TOO! . . . He is coming, do you hear that? I will talk to him, he is coming!' They are terrified, but he is coming!

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Cleaning Up

DAVID BENEDICTUS reports on CENSORSHIP in Britain today

'If you see a man coming toward you with the obvious intent of doing you good,' said the great Henry Thoreau, 'you should run for your life.' But run as hard as you can he's certain to catch you. For in Britain, as we enter the 1980s ('Big Brother is Watching You') it's a fair bet that there are more people involved in improving your moral character than in striving to destroy it. Thoreau again: 'As for Doing-good, that is one of the professions which are full.'

Committees are set up to report on who is harming us, how we are being harmed, and whether we are being harmed, and every time their reports appear, those who find their conclusions unacceptable spring into action like electric hares forever running around the same patch of dirty grass, never drawing away from the pursuing greyhounds yet never getting caught. In 1970 an extremely expensive and thorough Presidential Committee reported to President Nixon that it could find no evidence that pornographic material caused harm. Deleting an expletive or two, Nixon commented: 'The Commission on Pornography and Obscenity has performed a disservice and I totally reject its Report.'

Two years ago a Home Office publication by Stephen Brody (Research Study No. 40) analysed the evidence of some 360 research studies (one for every day of the year omitting bank holidays) carried out over the past 45 years and concluded that the possibility that violent actions seen on the screen will initiate violent action by the viewer is 'remote', although a Dr William Belson* took a random sample of 1,500 boys aged between 13 and 16 who had been exposed over the years to TV violence and found that they had been 'disinhibited' by the material. My conclusion is that the worthy doctor was lucky not to get his face kicked in.

Eysenck and Nias** support Dr Belson's conclusions, asserting that violence and pornography can and do have harmful effects, but Dr Robert Coles, a child psychiatrist at Harvard, argues persuasively that children don't need books to develop 'impulses and play habits that are openly sexual and violent'. If he came to tea in our house he would see his theories spectacularly justified! (Americans traditionally take a less hysterical view on these matters than we do. As long ago as 1933 Judge Woolsey gave his imprimatur to Joyce's *Ulysses* with: 'It must be remembered that his locale was Celtic and his season spring'.)

And now we have had the report of our latest committee which seems to have produced a sensible enough camel ('A camel is a horse designed by a committee') but a camel nonetheless, and, whatever happens to that report, the current situation with regard to obscenity and censorship remains... well, *unsatisfactory* is not too strong a word. So what *is* the current situation?

You can write almost anything you want to write in a book within the limits of the libel laws and the Official Secrets Act. It is still generally assumed – since class is behind most of our assumptions – that those who are actually prepared to spend time reading books are a) far too sophisticated to be corrupted or b) if corrupted, at least discreet, knowing by upbringing that it doesn't matter what you do, so long as you don't make a fool of yourself in public.

Books are dangerous, the argument runs, only when they are cheap. Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1792), which attacked the 'farce of monarchy and aristocracy', was sold

in two parts at 2/6 and 3/-. Paine was convicted of seditious libel, but the following year William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* was not suppressed because Pitt, the Prime Minister, felt that at three guineas it was unlikely to be inflammatory. The same arguments were used to prosecute such readily available books as Edward Charles's *The Sexual Impulse* (1935), a book, said the magistrate, not fit and decent for people of the working class to read, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1960) – but note in passing that D. H. Lawrence wrote† that he would censor genuine pornography rigorously – *Fanny Hill* (1964) and *Last Exit to Brooklyn* (1966). Indeed the likely readership of a book is enshrined in the current legislation – the Obscene Publications Act of 1959 – where a book, picture or other object is obscene if it is likely to deprave or corrupt those unfortunate enough to come into contact with it. This Act is vague and silly, but its vagueness is likely to operate in favour of serious works of literature, especially since the amendment of 1964 entitled a publisher to claim the right to trial by (vetted?) jury.

In fact, a book publisher today, it seems, would need to be more cautious about criminal libel, blasphemy and sedition than obscenity. The harsh libel laws, particularly, may drastically inhibit an impoverished author who is unlikely to be indemnified by his crocodile-skin-shod publisher.

Magazines are a different matter; their presence on the newsagents' shelves depending on the say-so of the local magistrates who have the power to order the destruction of any material seized by the police. Many of these magazines, which sell at 'popular' prices, go a good deal further than anything which would have been sold under the counter for several pounds ten years back. Once pubic hair – a charmingly hygienic adornment and, by its very nature, modest – was permitted, it was only a matter of time before everybody wanted 'split beavers' and then where was there to go but up the 'Blackwall tunnel'? At least those among whom such material circulates are unlikely to be as anatomically innocent as I was in the days of *Lilliput*. Inevitably there must come a time when, short of X-ray photography, the models have Shown All, and then the magazines' search for material to satisfy the prurient must be self-defeating. (I say nothing here about magazines which cater for fetishists and perverts, though I should have thought that anything might be depicted which did not require the law to be broken when the photograph was set up.)

At the moment at least with regard to magazines the countrywide situation is as variable as the weather, and newsagents are put quite unfairly at risk. The police make random raids and apply unpredictable standards of 'indecency' . By the time the case has been fought in the local court, assuming that the newsagent wins (which he is unlikely to do, local magistrates and local police sharing the same car park and being on friendly terms generally), his magazines will be returned to him but will then be so out of date as to be unsaleable – imagine the feelings of a greengrocer having a crate of peaches returned to him after a couple of months or so! Sometimes a policeman decides that he has a Mission and then there is nothing random about what takes place. Greater Manchester has been 'cleaned up' so ferociously that some say husbands are having to make love with their wives again out of sheer frustration. It will be instructive to see whether the sex crime statistics show a decline after such a purge; myself, I doubt it.

Nor are the police the only ones permitted to confiscate material. The officers of the Customs and Excise will seize and retain until it loses its retail value any material which they consider 'indecent' (a much softer definition of obscenity than the law insists upon). The effect is marginally to boost the balance of payments since importers, having lost a consignment of girlie or boyie magazines, may decide upon reflection that it's wiser to print the things in Britain. But one can hardly blame the Customs men if they apply their regulations too severely, when those regula-

*'Television Violence and the Adolescent Boy' – paper to the British Association

**Sex Violence and the Media by Eysenck and Nias (*Temple Smith* 1978)

†Pornography & Obscenity (London 1912, P.12)

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tions are vague to the point of impenetrability. Their excuse is that they are only human, which puts us all in the same boat. The Post Office is another body with the right to seize and confiscate material, but it's little used. Most of the mail is as good as confiscated anyway these days.

In the theatre since the demise of the Lord Chamberlain, who once took exception to the angle at which the interior decorator in *Fings Aint What They Used To Be* carried his ladder, the battlefield has become clouded, and one can no longer identify the enemy so clearly, nor the nature of one's injuries. When the Arts Council or local arts association reduces or removes its grant to a company, it may not amount to censorship. The work may not justify the subsidy, for agit-prop drama is frequently dreadful. Inevitably those who lose their grants are unlikely to accept the decision cheerfully and will claim to have been censored.

Sometimes their claims are vindicable, and recently the North West Spanner Company and Theatremobile have been the victims of those whose sensibilities they have offended. In the case of the latter company, which undertook a play about asbestosis and was rewarded with an injunction from a local firm which had initially helped them in their research, the grant from the mid-Pennine Arts Association was abruptly cut off and with it the activities of the company.

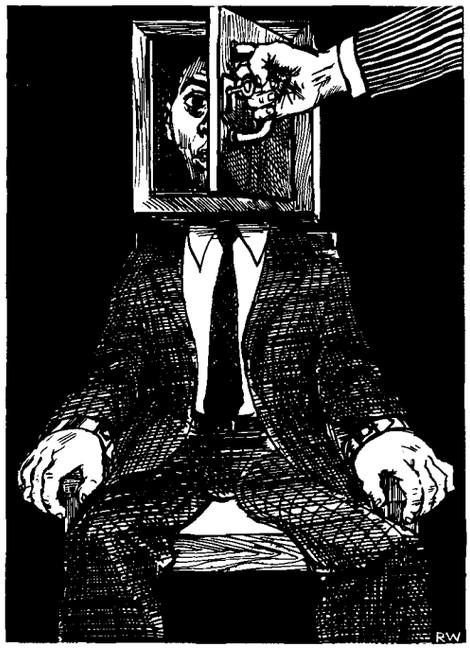
In London virtually anything goes. At the Royal Court, where Edward Bond's play *Saved*, in which a baby is abused and stoned to death in its pram, was banned in 1965, Alan Brown's *Wheelchair Willie*, a homely piece in which a baby is burned to death with a blowtorch (a deliberate reference back), an incontinent cripple has his tongue cut out and a pregnant woman is punched until she miscarries, passed in 1979 with little more than a few murmurs of revulsion. *A Thought in Three Parts*, which featured 'live' sex, so much to be preferred to the dead variety, and which was, according to Max Stafford Clarke 'the cheapest porn in London at £1.50 a seat', survived even the self-righteousness of the popular press ('Tax-payers Money Subsidises Pornography!'). Says Max: 'We used to get the same single men rushing for the front row of seats at each performance. At last, I thought, we're a community theatre!'

Outside London the situation is far more tense. When Piaf (in Pam Gem's play) pissed on stage, Stratford found it hard to swallow, though London didn't, while young male actors refused to speak the lines laid down for them in the same playwright's *Queen Christina*. Pam should take heart, however, for Aristophanes had similar actor trouble and had to play the controversial part of the dictator Creon himself.

Local and touring fringe companies are the ones most at risk, but perhaps they ought to question their dependence upon grants which threaten to compromise their radical approach. While working at the RSC on a Günter Grass play which concerned itself with the artist betraying his youthful ideals, I called one of the more radical actors a civil servant (which he didn't care for) and questioned whether, feeling that the revolution was overdue, he should continue to work in so heavily subsidised a company. He was quite angry at this.

However I feel increasingly that British theatre no longer does very much to deserve the compliment of censorship. We have learned that nudity may bring in the tourists but not world peace. Alf Garnett and Edna Everage at least require us to examine our prejudices, but it's some time since I saw a play which even asked that of us. Once they used to tear out the seats and burn them. Not now, darling.

As for films, the British Board of Film Censors has been stumbling pitifully around the bull-ring for so long now that it would be a kindness to dispatch it quickly. Instituted in 1912, the Board never had legislative powers; these were lodged with the local authorities who used them, when they used them at all, with all the discretion of a pick-up truck. For the most part though they were happy enough to abide by the certificates issued in London, and distributors and cinema managers accepted that that guaranteed them a measure of protection until the fulminating Raymond Blackburn brought a common law indecency charge against the sex education film *More About the Language of Love*. The guilty verdict in the lower court was upheld by Lord Denning.



After this the trade pressed the government to put films, like plays, under the Obscene Publications Act so that since 1977 they have no longer been subject to private prosecutions. Just as well with *Life of Brian* on general release. But films are still censored before we see them in the cinema and again before they reach the television screens, where they are sometimes shown in the 'television version', without any reference being made to this by the broadcasting company. And it was less than three years ago that Jens Jorgen Thorsen was refused permission to come to Britain because of his stated intention to make a film about the sex life of Jesus Christ. (I wonder which would have been thought more shocking, that he had one, or that he didn't?)

I have little doubt that, of all the arts, the cinema is the most powerful manipulator of the delicate machinery of the human psyche. Films such as Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, Ralph Nelson's *Soldier Blue*, and Michael Winner's *Death Wish*, mixed sex, violence and social comment in a powerfully upsetting way. Upsetting too because there could be little question that the money such films made at the box office resulted from the sexual and violent elements more than from the social comment. By contrast such 'pure in heart' films (the estimable Enid Wistrich's phrase) as *More About the Language of Love* or Dr Martin Cole's *Growing Up* scarcely deserved their opprobium.

Films are naturally suspect in Britain because most of the good ones are foreign and also because the cinema is relatively cheap and simple for 'susceptible' members of the community (by which the authorities mean those they most fear) to get into. The situation is mocked anyway by the hard-core cinema 'clubs' which show any films they can get past the customs men. Most of the clubs however limit themselves to the domestic sorts of sex as practised by – I imagine – the staffs of the big four banks. Occasionally the club system is used to promote films of real quality, such as Oshima's *Ai Non Corrida* (Empire of the Senses), a film of prolonged erotic content which *did* have trouble at the customs, and Pasolini's *Salo* (based on de Sade's *120 Days of Sodom*), which is doubly dangerous, telling a story of extreme sexual exploitation against a background of extreme political exploitation.

If it could be shown that films were as destructive as drunken drivers or hard drugs or poverty then there would be good cause to censor them. Otherwise it's arrogance for Mr Ferman or anyone else to claim that he, or they, know best. (In the world of the physically and mentally handicapped films and books are regularly censored, a particularly loathsome and sanctimonious practice).

Where broadcasting is concerned, it's a free for all. Recent events suggest that writers themselves (by self-censorship), story editors, directors, producers, heads of departments, executives, governors, watchdog committees, civil servants, ministers and even the Metropolitan Police, have a say in what we see or hear on our television or radio sets.

Northern Ireland and the tragic events there might be expected to merit serious attention in news, documentary and drama productions alike; it has not and does not. Drama productions are either shelved or given a different emphasis, viz. Caryl Churchill's *The Legion Hall Bombing*. The Writers Guild has recently proposed that disputes about censored scripts should come before a committee comprising representatives from the Guild, the BBC, and the creative talents involved in the programme to enable the latter at least to have an opportunity to argue their case while a possibility of compromise remains.

Such was not of course the procedure adopted in the recent notorious banning of Ian McEwan's *Solid Geometry* (see NS 30 March 1979). I don't believe the BBC to be activated by malice when they take such precipitate action; it's more an attitude of 'Believe us; we really do know best.'

News and documentary coverage on television remain superficial. The problems of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, conveniently distant, have been treated in greater depth than the civil war within our boundaries. But anything controversial is at risk. Such subjects as police corruption, the British Army, teenage or infantile sexuality, abortion, the trade unions, and the influence of television, are rarely investigated with the seriousness which they demand. The BBC issued instructions that the

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much praised 'Law and Order' series should not be sold overseas, presumably because it showed British institutions in an unfavourable light, and it has still not been repeated at home. The commercial companies seem to take more risks, but do not always remain staunch under pressure. A Kenneth Griffith film on Michael Collins has been kept in quarantine by ATV and is apparently so dangerous that even Mr Griffith may not see it (can one be corrupted by one's own creations? Discuss, with reference to Frankenstein, Pygmalion, Parkinson & etc.)

When we come to radio, the position is bleak. Bad language and abuse they never never use whatever the emergency and I shall be startled (and delighted) when I next hear a play or short story that seriously challenges our commonly held preconceptions. Interestingly a play about Rhodesia by William Smethurst which might have done just that was removed from the schedules when it was five days from rehearsal and recording, 'not', according to the BBC Head of Radio Drama, 'because the political stance was unacceptable but because a play on a delicate and tragic problem has to reflect the current situation.' *Has* to? Very curious.

Documentaries and features on radio are considerably more adult than the drama output and a recent series on the attitudes of European schoolchildren to the Nazis and the Fuehrer was a sockdolager (chess players will know what I mean).

On the news bulletins (and I speak of both Radio and TV now and of local stations as well as national ones) the bias is not so much the result, I think, of any deliberate and carefully charted propaganda campaign but of a subconscious attitude to events based on culture and class. The reporting of the Vietnam War was angled to reflect the desirability of an American victory – the Viet Cong were 'the enemy' and so on – while industrial disputes are seen in terms of threatening unions and conciliatory management – those concerned are always 'men', even if women are involved. Whenever royalty is mentioned the tone becomes either reverential or breezy. One feels that the Queen, who is quoted as remarking sagely that 'a society which does not defend itself is not worth defending' might herself welcome tougher treatment and less patting on the head.

Not that it is in fact all that easy for broadcasters, obliged by the charters of both the BBC and the Commercial companies to maintain a fair balance and to remember – as all journalists should – that every war and every strike, every soldier and every striker, is unique. Call a man or a woman right- or left-wing, extremist or moderate, and you have already stripped him or her of a particle of that uniqueness; furthermore you have desensitised yourself just a little while you are doing so.

And that's the thing about censorship. Whoever dares to flourish the blue pencil is proclaiming that he (or his masters) know best, which is a brave proclamation to make. For each successful traitor you need to have a sizeable number of patriots, for each successful blasphemy a sizeable number of believers, and for each successful censor a great mass of people who accept that he/she knows best what is best for them, better than they know themselves.

I don't. I don't even know what is best for me. I don't even know whether that admirable organisation, the Defence of Literature and the Arts Society, knows what is best for me; I doubt if it would claim to. But if there is a large tree shading my small garden from the sun (as there was) I reckon to get rid of the tree, and see how the garden flourishes (it's doing fine). And should a deputation of neighbours come calling and tell me that, whether I liked it or not, the tree *was* good for the garden and they've got reports by learned committees to prove it and will I plant another one at once, I shall quote Voltaire at them – serve them right – and tell them to cultivate their own gardens and leave mine be.

Censorship (2)

EVA FIGES discusses the recently published Report of the Committee on obscenity and film censorship*

Since obscenity is in the eye of the beholder, the Committee under the chairmanship of Bernard Williams has been extremely conscientious in inviting submissions not only from interested groups such as writers or policemen, but from individuals with a view to establishing what should, I suppose, be called consensus visibility. Reading through the report, one is constantly struck by the fact that, like witch-hunts at certain periods in history, the fight against obscenity has in recent years been left to a few quixotic individuals without whom the obscenity laws might by now have fallen into disuse.

Apart from her campaign to clean up broadcasting, which is not covered by this report, it was Mrs Whitehouse who also blew the dust off the blasphemy law. The name of Mr Raymond Blackburn crops up time and again. It was he who prodded the slumbering DPP about an erotic film and instituted proceedings to ask why the Metropolitan Police was failing to enforce the law against Soho porn shops, though perhaps he was unprepared for the ultimate answer, i.e. that the police were running a protection racket.

The Committee seems to have listened to everybody with dispassionate sympathy, even to Mr Holbrook, who believes he is being unfairly ostracised by a corrupt élite of literary editors who think he is wrong. When the women's movement failed to make submissions in the first instance, they were invited to testify, and put forward the eminently sensible view that as far as the degradation of women is concerned pornography is a symptom and not itself the disease. Unfortunately not everybody is of that opinion, but the Committee examined and dismissed 'expert' testimony which tried to prove a causal link between pornography and sexual offences as highly dubious and unproven.

Trying to discover what is offensive to the eye of the average beholder is a tricky business and should really have been undertaken by Dean Swift. Recent opinion polls suggest that most people do not even know what is meant by obscenity, have never given it any thought, or, if they have, are in a dreadful muddle about it. Thus, 79% thought that all films should be censored, but 46% agreed that adults should be allowed to see exactly what they chose. Do you believe in witches? Of course not. Should witches be burned? Definitely.

Having listened to all the evidence, such as it is, and to a good deal of opinion, the Committee has come to sensible conclusions on the worth and validity of the evidence submitted. But it is surprising that the press should have regarded this report as some sort of pornographers' charter, because it is nothing of the sort. It is a highly conservative document in its proposals.

Although the Committee recommends that the written word should no longer be subject to prosecution for obscenity, this is only ratifying a *de facto* situation, since the authorities testified that, after the failure to obtain a prosecution against *Inside Linda Lovelace*, it was unlikely that the Obscene Publications Act of 1959 would ever be invoked again.

As far as pictorial pornography is concerned, the Committee recommends that this should be sold only in specialised shops with blank exteriors where persons under 18 are not admitted. The only prohibited material would be pictures involving persons under 16 and those to which there is reason to believe actual physical injury was inflicted, and such material would be liable to prosecution. I suspect that these measures will merely enhance the glamour of forbidden fruit for young boys and lead to greater financial exploitation.

However, my most serious doubts concern the Committee's recommendations on film censorship. It is obvious that the Committee was shocked by some of the films it saw, and has come out very much on the side of caution. Bearing in mind the anomalous position of the present British Board of Film Censors it recommends a new statutory board set up by the Government, which would lay down the policy for censoring films, and would be made up of educationists, lawyers, local authorities, as well as representatives from the film industry.

But the danger of political censorship, now so obvious in broadcasting, does not seem to have occurred to them. Indeed, having rejected words like 'deprave and corrupt' and 'obscene' as pretty meaningless they come up with their own mumbojumbo with regard to films. The Board, they say, should refuse a certificate to a film which depicts violence, sexual activity or crime in an unacceptable way, or that contains 'material prohibited by law'. 'But the Board would not be able to refuse a certificate to a film not containing unlawful material without having regard to the importance of allowing the development of artistic expression and of not suppressing truth or reality.' I have seen this feature before. No, this is where we came in.

*HMSO £5.25

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They No Laugh Today . . .

FRANK KEATING recalls the best and worst of a year's SPORT

In sport, nothing became the year like the leaving of it. Squirmingly fades the Don. The enduring memory will be of Mr Justice Cantley, hot from his dog's dinner with Rinka, and now in the red and yellow colours and sash of a South American park football team, leaning down from his grandstand seat to admonish the shiny-suited, sunburned former manager of the England football team. Mr Don Revie, once the over-publicised totem for Britain's youth, won his match on a technicality. But he lost the big one. And got the red card to boot. He was 'greedy, selfish, discourteous, prickly and a liar', said the judge, and so was English soccer's overblown Saturday night conceit of itself exposed – and about time too. (Meanwhile, Mr Tommy Docherty, last year's top-of-the-bill at the same venue, was lying low in hospital after a spot of buffet bovver after t'match).

At one point Mr Revie told the court that the *Daily Mail* had paid him a substantial amount to announce his resignation. 'A sum which is substantial to Mr Revie must be substantial indeed', remarked the judge. And so did Don's nickname merit official baptism: even in his earliest days with Leeds United his players dubbed him Don Readies.

It was a year for nicknames. No self-respecting ghost writer dared hack out a muscular biog without a first chapter glossary of nicknames. It was worst in cricket, a game once dominated by initials as in R. W. V. Robins or Compton D. C. S. Now Mike Brearley, we learned, is called Scagg because his father was born in Scagglethorpe, Yorks., and he led a bunch which included Goose (Willis), Lulu (Gower), Zapata (Gooch) and Guy the Gorilla (Botham), which last also answered to the name Iron Bottom because that's how his Indian opponents addressed him. Tee Hee, Yawn Yawn.

That's sort of thing that took up most of the few fine days of the summer, though the aforesaid Gorilla played one stupendously hairy-armed innings and there was another coruscating knock by Gavaskar of India which lit up the Oval. Into the winter and England continue to hold their catches and Jim Laker to drop his gees. (Incidentally, they run up nicknames better in American locker rooms: a Polish footballer named Ritchie Duda so impressed the rest of his side, the Chicago Sting, on his first appearance that by the second-half they were saying 'Outside you, Zippity'.)

As awards pervade the Advent air they are all being collected by a tidy trim, too-good-to-be-true manchild who is trained by his dad and addressed with over-familiar unctuousness by David Coleman as SEBCO as if he was a one-man Kentish brickworks. Sebastian Coe broke three world running records in 41 days. Nobody had done that before. He was unpaced. He simply led the field from the start and alarmed the clock. At the tag end of the summer, Steve Ovett, spindlier and spikier and very much a mummy's boy, failed by split seconds to break two of Coe's records.

So Britain lolls in the presumption that at least a couple of Olympic finals in July will not include Americans, Finns, Ethiopians, Cubans or Russians, but just our two gallant lads who will battle it out together. There are qualifying heats for a start, favourites seldom win, and as Coe said the other day, 'in athletics you are only a hamstring niggle away from oblivion'.

Nevertheless relish at the possibility of such a meeting is helping the nation's hibernation, especially as the two have such different, identifiable personalities. The New Zealand athlete, Rod Dixon, told me in the summer:

> Ovett is a phenomenal athlete but his total disregard for other runners is objectionable; so is his swagger and wave at the tape. Cockiness might be all right now but when he stops winning and is back there toiling with the rest of the bunch, well they're just going to despise him for an arsehole, aren't they? I've always tried to get on with Ovett, but I must say he increasingly reminds me of the lift operators – you know, those people you meet on the way up are going to be the same as you meet on the way down. Sebastian is something else. As an athlete and a person he's one of the most delightful beings I've ever met. He restores my faith in our sport. He's not only near perfect as a runner, but also a thoroughly modest and delightful guy.

We shall see if nice guys finish first.

The high summer was dominated by two foreigners with equally different personalities. Severiano Ballesteros, a 21-year-old former Spanish caddy, zigzagged his way through carpark and sand dune to win a sublime and ridiculous British Open golf championship. Afterwards his brother explained: 'In Spain, when little, other caddies sat playing boys' games and laughed when brother Sevvy came in – how you say? – like drowning rat maybe five hours afterwards. They no laugh today. They still carry golf bags'.

The other was a sad and solemn Swede, older than his years and inclined to boils and pimples. He bottles it all up and is almost unbeatable. Bjorn Borg won Wimbledon for an unprecedented fourth time, sank to his knees in a momentary show of emotion, then readjusted his impassive ferret's face and said 'My game was okay as usual and Roscoe played very well'. That was five more words than his normal press release.

On finals day I went to Henley and back in the time capsule to see what Wimbledon might have been like before I was born and the Robinson's Barley Water was actually served by Old Heathers and not a tedious junior executive on the make from the Special Events Public Relations and Marketing Department. Olde Englande may have gone but it's not forgotten at Henley. I took a tiny transistor to keep up with the tennis; just in case.

'Is that a portable wireless receiver?' asked a boatered, blazered young blade who screens you as you attempt entry. 'No, it's me tranny', I replied. He examined it and me, witheringly. 'This is a portable wireless receiver', he said. 'Please leave it in that tent with those confiscated perambulators.' The pushchairs he indicated were not allowed either, but there were a great many senile old gents in their prep-school caps and straightjacketed into stripey shrunken jackets being wheeled around in wheelchairs. Wheelchairs at Henners are not perambulators. 'Come on Jesus, f'christsakes!' gruffed one whose pusher wore a chauffeur's cap. 'Pull y'finger out Clare!' hollered another. 'It's deeply gratifying', someone else remarked, 'that this Canadian crew all have English names, what?'

Talking of the wheelchair brigade, if the tragedy of the year was the Rugby Union's sinister determination to play games with South Africa, the joke of the decade, England's rugby team, went out in typically fine style.

It was especially galling to the old buffers in view of the continued success of the grimy and gloating Welsh chappies who get promoted to top jobs as carpet salesmen or somesuch and get paid in money for writing their wretched memoirs, donchaknow.

But the England soccer team might be said to have perked up. At least they qualified to play in the European Championship next summer when they beat a leaden Bulgarian side who, in the words of Peter Jones of BBC radio, 'went forward more in hope than optimism'.

England were coaxed and captained by a somewhat over-rated scurrier who wants to be Prime Minister so is polishing up his image in Germany; they are coached and coddled now, not by Mr Readies but by the schoolmarmish Ron Greenwood, presumed to be a veritable footer philosopher for such considered utterances as 'There are two basic situations in football. You either have the ball or you haven't.'

Nothing like the perception of the Don who, before he sailed for the sands in his dark glasses, wrote in the Schoolboy's Soccer Diary of 1977: 'Football in the 1970s is very rewarding financially and can provide the opportunity to travel to almost any country in the globe.'

Nor did I hear Jimmy Hill last Saturday night asking Mr Justice Cantley to talk us through it just one more time.

Gavin Ewart

Mock Carol

Jesus Christ was born to-day!
Hooray, hooray, hooray!
Whatever any of you may say
He was born to cancel our terrible sins
And save us all from loony bins!
Hooray, hooray, hooray!

Jesus Christ was born to-day!
Hooray, hooray, hooray, hooray!
This is no time to watch and pray,
Let's all get drunk and drink a toast
To the Virgin Mary and the Holy Ghost!
Hooray, hooray, hooray!

Jesus Christ was born to-day!
Hooray, hooray, hooray, hooray!
Over-eating's a lovely way
To do Him honour; each Yuletide gift
Gives Him a God Almighty lift!
Hooray, hooray, hooray!

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If You Twist my Arm

DAVID MERCER versus Israeli TV

Just over a year ago I accepted a commission from the BBC TV drama producer Louis Marks to write a television film which would be set and shot on location in Israel. Arnon Zuckermann, the then head of Israeli TV, had expressed interest in the idea of a co-production; and since I spend several months each year in Haifa with my (Israeli) wife and small daughter, Marks understandably thought I might feel tempted to write a script with an Israeli theme.

Tempted, yes. Also nervous. A great deal can be known about the Israeli/Arab conflict without coming anywhere near what it feels like to be trapped in it. And the contradictory reactions experienced there by a European non-Jew soon lead to the conclusion that the emotional realities dominant for a Jewish citizen of Israel are very nearly inaccessible to the outsider. They can be understood or imagined; but in the context of two thousand years of Jewish history, the profound significance of nationhood and a hard-won new identity is something which has deeper roots than reason or the imagination alone can come to terms with. However in the end I decided that precisely what interested me most was the ambivalence of the outsider (albeit one who has 'married-in') in relation to the Israelis' conception of themselves.

What I set out to do was write a script in which Israel would be treated as in a sense one of the protagonists. To write neither a tract nor a tendentious political analysis posing as drama; but rather find a human centre around which some of the issues might coalesce. I postulated the arrival in Israel of an English woman journalist (Jane) in her late thirties, with a brief to write a long magazine article on the country. She has informed and intelligent preconceptions. She is unattached, independent, with a background of having spent a number of years covering the Vietnam war, where she had a lengthy abortive affair with an American photographer. Perhaps most crucially, she arrives in Israel with a tough and ironic determination to stand aloof from the emotional claims of partisanship.

Jane's interviews and investigations set the scene for her meeting and love affair with Nadav, an Israeli of her own age who is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Jerusalem. He is a widower with a four-year-old daughter who is being raised by her grandmother but spends weekends with Nadav in his Jerusalem flat. An anglophile and a specialist in 17th-century English poetry, he is a reclusive and introverted man who speaks of his father Yosef as '. . . a casualty of the founding ideas'; and to Jane: 'The only casualty I am prepared to be is a dead or wounded Israeli soldier. They can have that. But nothing else.' In fact Nadav has already fought in the Six Day and Yom Kippur Wars; and, as is not uncommon among educated Israelis of his generation, he is largely unmoved by nationalist or orthodox Zionist rhetoric. He understands that to many Arabs he is a species of 'colon'; but also believes that Yasser Arafat's 'dream' of a democratic multi-racial and multi-religious nation of Palestine would entail the dissolution of the State of Israel and, almost certainly, once more the collective alienation of the Jewish people. I think in this way Nadav characteristically embodies a most poignant, sensitive and by no means unusual (particularly among the many young agnostic Israelis) awareness of the contradictions which are themselves embodied in the very existence of the State of Israel.

Other characters in the play exemplify a variety of positions and attitudes, in some cases mere postures derived from the received wisdom which is put about with disturbing effectiveness by the State itself. However it is Nadav with whom Jane falls in love. The course of their relationship is traced through the play to a point where he makes his one and only defensive statement, when Jane is attacking him for his ambivalence towards one of his Arab students who has appealed to him for protection during a round-up after a bombing incident:

> JANE: I realise I don't know what you feel. I realise whatever you do feel, it has to be outside the rights and wrongs of it all. (*pause*) I could have hit you when that boy was here. I really hated you. I felt really violent. (*pause*) Did I hate the Jew? (*pause*) You only have to be stubbornly rational in this country – to be called an anti-semite in the end. (*pause*) You've got the out-clause of all time. What got to me as much as anything else. There we were, you and I. Rowing. And Ibrahim could have been *invisible*! (*pause*) Don't you suppose that's the way they feel most of the time?
>
> NADAV: Yes. (*pause*) I suppose I do.
>
> *JANE crosses to the big clothes cupboard and takes out his automatic rifle.*
>
> JANE: There's that. (*throws it at his feet*) How could I accept you . . . and that . . . as I'm sure most Israeli women must? (*pause*) As I'm sure most Palestinian women must. (*pause*) So that you can go out the door with it loved. Respected. Understood. (*pause*) And finally mourned?
>
> *A pause. NADAV picks up the gun. Holds it across his chest.*
>
> NADAV: Outside Israel, no Jew was ever born who didn't know fear. (*pause*) For two thousand years they burn, freeze, run, hide, die. (*pause*) Yes, everyone knows fear. But how many are born to it? How many spend their lives waiting for the others to turn on them? (*pause*) A coup. A revolution. Any new kind of dispensation. A whim of history. A new monarch. A new government. (*smiles thinly*) Even a mere downturn in the economy. (*pause*) Outside Israel there is not a Jew who does not wait in his heart for the day to come when the non-Jews will turn on him in hatred and anger. (*pause*) He believes that day must come, as the seasons come. (*pause*) The cossacks ride through our old people's dreams like the horsemen of the apocalypse. The gas-ovens roar this music in our ears: Sobibor. Chelmno. Auschwitz. Birkenau. Belsen. Buchenwald. Treblinka. Ravensbrück. (*pause*) Before, there was nowhere to go. (*pause*) If we ever could believe your doves, we might find the conviction to silence our own hawks. (*pause*) But can we?

Earlier, Nadav has listened while Jane asked his father: 'What do you say to those who wonder why the Palestinian Arabs should pay with their homes and land for what the Nazis did to the Jews in Europe?' And heard his father reply: 'We do not think the holocaust gave us a writ for the future either.' Nadav does not disagree; but in moments of bitter confrontation, inevitably a raw nerve runs back to the camps and this too maddeningly pre-empts the logic of the outsider.

Suffering from a kind of emotional attrition, Jane walks out on Nadav after the incident with the Arab student Ibrahim. She leaves Israel but is soon drawn back. There is no suggestion that she has accepted any one of the many arguments heard over any other – since indeed rationality is not the province of love, although the frailty of love in face of social, cultural and other antagonisms is surely a province of art. At any rate Jane has made a choice which would have seemed almost inconceivable to her at the opening of the play; and if this is a conclusion which less illustrates the nature of a tragic historical conflict than the imprudent anarchy of human love and compassion, I make no apologies.

But in the course of the piece (entitled *A Dinner of Herbs* from *Proverbs* 15.17) we have heard a great deal which is not often said aloud in Israel. And during the writing of it, Arnon Zuckermann's contract as head of Israeli Television came up for renewal and was allowed to lapse by the new overall head of broadcasting, Yosef Lapid. Lapid, a staunch Likud man, is virtually a satrap of the right-wing coalition between the Likud and National Religious Parties which dominates the present government. Since ITV's controlling board directly reflects the proportional representation system on which the country's general elections are based, there results a state of affairs – now autocratically presided over by Lapid – in which the boundaries between government and media autonomy are virtually notional.

At a private meeting in Tel Aviv last September, Lapid told me that, despite the fact that the play had been formally accepted by the BBC, he considered it an unsuitable item for an Israeli/BBC TV co-production. A small tubby man with dead eyes, resonating wattles and a wily if mediocre cast of mind, he gave his reasons as follows: (1) it reads like Arab propaganda; (2) it contains nothing Israelis don't know anyway; (3) in the context of (1) and (2) it would merely irritate Israeli audiences; (4) in the context of (1), (2) and (3) he wasn't justified in spending money on 'something cooked up in London'. He delivered this indictment with all the numbing self-importance of an obtuse party hack enjoying the fruits of power as the impregnable boss of a state monopoly.

After some two hours of skirmishing he then fell back at last – cornered if unbeleaguered – on his opinion that *A Dinner of Herbs* is 'undramatic' and: 'Yes, if you twist my arm I'd say not good enough'. Considering that indigenous TV drama is almost non-existent in Israel it was clear for whom the play was not good enough, and Lapid agreed that yes, it was his decision alone and yes, he makes them all: 'Somebody has to, don't they?'

As I left he was saying: 'People are always talking about how bad Israeli TV is. This is because they will insist on comparing it with the BBC. Now if they compared it with *Italian* TV – they'd have to admit we're doing a good job.'

I smiled. Somebody has to, don't they?

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The Mourning Thief

a story by DESMOND HOGAN

Coming through the black night he wondered what lay before him, a father lying dying, Christmas, midnight ceremonies in a church which stood up like a gravestone, floods about his home.

With him were his wife and his friend Gerard. They needn't have come by boat but something purgatorial demanded it of Liam, the gulls that shot over like stars, the roxy music in the juke box, the occasional Irish ballad rising in cherished defiance of the sea.

The night was soft, breezes intruded, plucking hair, thread lying loose in many coloured jerseys. Susan fell asleep once while Liam looked at Gerard. It was Gerard's first time in Ireland. Gerard's eyes were chestnut, his dark hair cropped like a monk on a bottle of English brandy.

With his wife sleeping Liam could acknowledge the physical relationship that lay between them. It wasn't that Susan didn't know, but despite the truism of promiscuity in the school where they worked there still abided laws like the Old Testament God's, reserving carnality for smiles after dark.

A train to Galway, the Midlands frozen in.

Susan looked out like a Botticelli Venus, a little worried, often just vacuous. She was a music teacher, thus her mind was penetrated by the vibrations of Bach even if the place was a public lavatory or a Lyons cafe.

The red house at the end of the street; it looked cold, pushed away from the other houses. A river in flood lay behind. A woman, his mother, greeted him. He an only child, she soon to be widow. But something disturbed Liam with excitement. Christmas candles still burned in this town.

His father lay in bed, still magically alive, white hair smeared on him like a dummy, that hard face that never forgave an enemy in the police force still on him. He was delighted to see Liam. At 83 he was a most ancient father, marrying late, begetting late, his wife 15 years younger than him.

A train brushed the distance outside. Adolescence returned with a sudden start, the gold flurry of snow as the train in which he was travelling sped towards Dublin, the films about Russian winters.

Irish winters became Russian winters in turn and half of Liam's memories of adolescence were of the fantasised presence of Russia. Ikons, candles, streets agleam with snow.

'Still painting?'

'Still painting.' As though he could ever give it up. His father smiled as though he were about to grin. 'Well, we never made a policeman out of you.'

At ten, day before he would have been inaugurated as a boy scout, Liam handed in his uniform. He always hated the colours of the Irish flag, mixing like the yolk in a bad egg.

It hadn't disappointed his father that he hadn't turned into a military man but his father preferred to hold on to a shred of prejudice against Liam's chosen profession, leaving momentarily aside one of his most cherished memories, visiting the National Gallery in Dublin once with his son, encountering the curator by accident and having the curator show them around, an old man who'd since died, leaving behind a batch of poems and a highly publicised relationship with an international writer.

But the sorest point, the point now neither would mention, was arguments about violence. At 17 Liam walked the local hurling pitch with petitions against the war in Vietnam.

Liam's father's fame, apart from being a police inspector of note, was fighting in the GPO in 1916 and subsequently being arrested on the republican side in the civil war. Liam was against violence, pure and simple. Nothing could convince him that 1916 was right. Nothing could convince him it was different from now, old women, young children, being blown to bits in Belfast.

Statues abounded in this house; in every nook and cranny was a statue, a statue of Mary, a statue of Joseph, an emblem perhaps of some saint Mrs Fogarthy had sweetly long forgotten.

This was the first thing Gerard noticed, and Susan who had seen this menagerie before was still surprised. 'It's like a holy statue farm.'

Gerard said it was like a holy statue museum. They were sitting by the fire, two days before Christmas. Mrs Fogarthy had gone to bed.

'It is a museum', Liam said, 'all kinds of memories, curious sensations here, ghosts. The ghosts of Irish republicans, of policemen, military men, priests, the ghosts of Ireland.'

'Why ghosts?' Gerard asked.

'Because Ireland is dying,' Liam said.

Just then they heard his father cough.

Mr Fogarthy was slowly dying, cancer welling up in him. He was dying painfully and yet peacefully because he had a dedicated wife to look after him and a river in flood around, somehow calling Christ to mind, calling penance to mind, instilling a sense of winter in him that went back a long time, a river in flood around a limestone town.

Liam offered to cook the Christmas dinner but his mother scoffed him. He was a good cook, Susan vouched. Once Liam had cooked and his father had said he wouldn't give it to the dogs.

They walked, Liam, Susan, Gerard, in a town where women were hugged into coats like brown paper accidentally blown about them. They walked in the grounds of Liam's former school, once a Georgian estate, now beautiful, elegant still in the East Galway winter solstice.

There were tinkers to be seen in the town, and English hippies behaving like tinkers. Many turkeys were displayed, fatter than ever, festooned by holly.

Altogether one would notice prosperity everywhere, cars, shining clothes, modern fronts replacing the antique ones Liam recalled and pieced together from childhood.

But he would not forfeit England for this dull patch of Ireland, Southern England where he'd lived since he was 22, Sussex, the trees plump as ripe pears, the rolling verdure, the odd delight of an Elizabethan cottage. He taught with Susan, with Gerard, in a free school. He taught children to paint. Susan taught them to play musical instruments. Gerard looked after younger children though he himself played a musical instrument, a cello.

Once Liam and Susan had journeyed to London to hear him play at Saint Martin in the Fields, entertaining ladies who wore poppies in their lapels, as his recital coincided with Remembrance Day and paper poppies generated an explosion of remembrance.

Susan went to bed early now, complaining of fatigue, and Gerard and Liam were left with one another.

Though both were obviously male they were lovers, lovers in a tentative kind of way, occasionally sleeping with one another. It was still an experiment but for Liam held a matrix of adolescent fantasy. Though he married at 22, his sexual fantasy from adolescence was always homosexual.

Susan could not complain. In fact it rather charmed her. She'd had more lovers since they'd married than fingers could count; Liam would always accost her with questions about their physicality; were they more satisfying than him?

But he knew he could count on her; tenderness between them had lasted six years now.

She was English, very much English. Gerard was English. Liam was left with this odd quarrel of Irishness. Memories of adolescence at boarding school, waking from horrific dreams nightly when he went to the window to throw himself out but couldn't because window sills were jammed.

His father had placed him at boarding school, to toughen him like meat.

Liam had not been toughened, chastened, ran away twice. At 18 he left altogether, went to England, worked on a building site, put himself through college. He ended up in Sussex, losing a major part of his Irishness but retaining this, a knowledge when the weather was going to change, a premonition of all kinds of disasters and ironically an acceptance of the worst disasters of all, death, estrangement.

Now that his father was near death, old teachers, soldiers, policemen called, downing sherries, laughing rhetorically, sitting beside the bed covered by a quilt that looked like 20 inflated balloons.

Sometimes Liam, Susan, Gerard sat with these people, exchanging remarks about the weather, the fringe of politics or the world economic state generally.

Mrs Fogarthy swept up a lot. She dusted and danced around with a cloth as though she'd been doing this all her life, fretting and fiddling with the house.

Cars went by. Geese went by, clanking terribly. Rain came and church bells sounded from a desperate steeple.

Liam's father reminisced about 1916, recalling little incidents, fights with British soldiers, comrades dying in his arms, ladies fainting

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from hunger, escape to Mayo, later imprisonment in the Curragh during the civil war. Liam said: 'Do you ever connect it with now, men, women, children being blown up, the La Mon Hotel bombing, Bessbrook killings, Birmingham, Bloody Friday? Do you ever think that the legends and the brilliance built from your revolution created this, death justified for death's sake, the stories in the classroom, the priests' stories, this language, this celebration of blood?'

Although Liam's father fought himself once, he belonged to those who deplored the present violence, seeing no connection. Liam saw the connection but disavowed both.

'Hooligans! Murderers!' Liam's father said.

Liam said 'You were once a hooligan then.'

'We fought to set a majority free.'

'And created the spirit of violence in the new state. We were weaned on violence, me and others of my age. Not actual violence but always with a reference to violence. Violence was right, we were told in class. How can one blame those now who go out and plant bombs to kill old women when they were once told this was right?'

The dying man became angry. He didn't look at Liam, looked beyond him to the street.

'The men who fought in 1916 were heroes. Those who lay bombs in cafes are scum.'

Betrayed he was silent then, silent because his son accused him on his death-bed of unjustifiably resorting to bloodshed once. Now guns went off daily, in the far-off North. Where was the line between right and wrong? Who could say? An old man on his death bed prayed that the guns he'd fired on 1916 had been for a right cause and in the words of his leader Patrick Pearse had not caused undue bloodshed.

On Christmas Eve the three young people and Mrs Fogarthy went to midnight mass in the local church. In fact it wasn't to the main church but a smaller one, situated on the outskirts of the town, protruding like a headstone.

A bald middle-aged priest greeted a packed congregation. The cemetery lay nearby, but one was unaware of it. Christmas candles and Christmas trees glowed in bungalows.

'Come all ye Faithful,' a choir of matchstick boys sang. Their dress was scarlet, scarlet of joy.

Afterwards Mrs Fogarthy penetrated the crib with a whisper of prayer.

Christmas morning, clean, spare, Liam was award of estrangement from his father, that his father was ruminating on his words about violence, wondering were he and his ilk, the teachers, police, clergy of Ireland responsible for what was happening now, in the first place by nurturing the cult of violence, contributing to the actuality of it as expressed by young men in Belfast and London.

Sitting up on Christmas morning Mr Fogarthy stared ahead. There was a curiosity about his forehead. Was he guilty? Were those in high places guilty like his son said?

Christmas dinner; Gerard joked, Susan smiled, Mrs Fogarthy had a sheaf of joy. Liam tidied and somehow sherry elicited a chuckle and a song from Mrs Fogarthy. 'I have seen the lark soar high at dawn.' The song rose to the bedroom where her husband who'd had dinner in bed heard it.

The street outside was bare.

Gerard fetched a guitar and brought all to completion, Christmas, birth, festive eating, by a rendition of Bach's 'Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring.'

Liam brought tea to his father. His father looked at him. "Twas lovely music,' his father said with a sudden brogue, 'there was a Miss Hanratty who lived here before you were born who studied music in Heidelberg and could play Schumann in such a way as to bring tears to the cat's eyes. Poor soul, she died young, a member of the ladies' confraternity. Schumann was her favourite and Mendelssohn came after that. She played at our wedding, your mother's and mine. She played Mozart and afterwards in the hotel sang a song, what was it, oh yes, "The Star of the County Down".

'Such a sweetness she had in her voice too.

'But she was a bit of a loner and a bit lost here. Never too well really. She died maybe when you were a young lad.'

Reminiscences, names from the past, Catholic names, Protestant names, the names of boys in the rugby club, in the golf club, Protestant girls he'd danced with, nights at the October fair.

They came easily now, a simple jargon. Sometimes though the old man visibly stopped to consider his child's rebuke.

Liam gauged the sadness, wished he hadn't said anything, wanted to simplify it but knew it possessed all the simplicity it could have, a man on his death bed in dreadful doubt.

Christmas night they visited the convent crib, Liam, Susan, Gerard, Mrs Fogarthy, a place glowing with a red lamp.

Outside trees stood in silence, a mist thinking of enveloping them. The town lay in silence. At odd intervals one heard the gurgle of television but otherwise it could have been childhood, the fair-green, space, emptiness, the rhythm, the dance of one's childhood dreams.

Liam spoke to his father that evening.

'Where I work we try to educate children differently from other places, teach them to develop and grow from within, try to direct them from the most natural point within them. There are many such schools now but ours, ours I think is special, run as a co-operative; we try to take children from all class backgrounds and begin at the beginning to redefine education.'

'And do you honestly think they'll be better educated children than you were, that the way we educated you was wrong?'

Liam paused.

'Well, it's an alternative.'

His father didn't respond, thinking of nationalistic, comradely Irish school teachers long ago. Nothing could convince him that the discipline of the old style of education wasn't better, grounding children in basic skills.

Silence somehow interrupted a conversation, darkness deep around them, the water of the floods shining, reflecting stars.

Liam said goodnight. Liam's father grunted. Susan already lay in bed. Liam got in beside her. They heard a bird let out a scream in the sky like a baby and they went asleep.

Gerard woke them in the morning, strumming a guitar.

Saint Stephen's day, mummers stalked the street, children with blackened faces and a regalia of rags collecting for the wren. Music of a tin whistle came from a pub, the town coming to life. The river shone with sun.

Susan divined a child dressed like old King Cole, a crown on her head and her face blackened. Gerard was intrigued. They walked the town. Mrs Fogarthy had lunch ready. But Liam was worried, deeply worried. His father lay above, immersed in the past.

Liam had his past too, always anxious in adolescence, running away to Dublin, eventually running away to England. The first times home had been odd; he noticed the solitariness of his parents. They'd needed him like they needed an ill-tended dog.

Susan and he had married in the local church. There'd been a contagion of aunts and uncles at the wedding. Mrs Fogarthy had prepared a meal. Salad and cake, The river had not been in flood then.

In England he worked hard. Ireland could so easily be forgotten with the imprint of things creative, children's drawing, oak trees in blossom, Tudor cottages where young women in pinafores served tea and cakes, home made and juiced with icing.

He'd had no children. But Gerard now was both a twin, a child, a lover to him. There were all kinds of possibility. Experiment was only beginning. Yet Ireland, Christmas, returned him to something, least of all the presence of death, more a proximity to the prom, empty laburnum pods and hawthorn trees naked and crouched with winter. Here he was at home with thoughts, thoughts of himself, of adolescence.

Here he made his own being like a doll on a miniature globe. He knew whence he came and if he wasn't sure where he was going, at least he wasn't distraught about it.

They walked with his mother that afternoon. Later an aunt came, preened for Christmas and the imminence of death. She enjoyed the tea, the knowledgeable silences, looked at Susan as though she was not from England but a far off country, an eastern country hidden in the mountains. Liam's father spoke to her not of 1916 but of policemen they'd known, irascible characters, forgetting that he had been the most irascible of all, a domineering man with a wizened face ordering his inferiors around.

He'd brought law. He'd brought order to the town. But he'd failed to bring trust. Maybe that's why his son had left.

Maybe that's why he was pondering the fate of the Irish revolution now, men with high foreheads who'd shaped the fate of the Irish republic.

His thoughts brought him to killings now being done in the name of Ireland. There his thoughts floundered. From where arose this language of violence for the sake and convenience of violence?

Liam strode by the prom alone that evening, locked in a donkey jacket.

There were rings of light around distant electric poles.

He knew his father to be sitting up in bed; the policemen he'd been talking about earlier gone from his mind and his thoughts on 1916, on guns, and blazes, and rumination in prison cells long ago.

And long after that thoughts on the glorification of acts of violence, the minds of children caressed with the deeds of violence.

He'd be thinking of his son who fled and left the country.

His son now was thinking of the times he'd run away to Dublin, to the neon lights slitting the night, of the time he went to the river to throw himself in and didn't, of his final flight from Ireland.

He wanted to say something, urge a statement to birth that would unite father and son but couldn't think of anything to say. He

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John Berger

Six Postcard Poems

Maritsa Plain

The agronomists in pointed shoes
step over the dead dog
dragged to the border of the highway
entering the field they bend
to examine handfuls of black soil
the wind furls their lightweight suits
around their limbs
like the air from a gigantic experimental fan
and the peasants
in their patches and quilted jackets
look on and ask:
what in our familiar earth
can they hope to find?

Slavonski Brod

The wooden slav house
has double windows
so that winter cold
may not enter
put its hands on the table
its feet in the bed

in summer and autumn
on the wooden sill
between the windows
flowers are regularly
watered in their pots
so that there is always colour
between kitchen
and garden

there too are kept
between the panes
the invisible keepsakes
of those who left

Teslic

There is the dust
of the dawn bus
on the unmade road
across the pass

In every village
girls who are woman
and boys with moustaches
wait to ride to school

The bus of knowledge is leaving
leaving the old behind
soon the dust will settle
on the unmade road

Bakar

The village which told stories
during the night of centuries
above the bay of the tuna
has fallen silent
astounded
by the news of the refinery
and its refrain
flaming continually
against the hills
even on the days of funerals

Soave

On her bicycle she rides
beside a dead canal
reciting the lines by Carducci
she learnt last week at school
on this canal when I was young
barges crossed so close
it was like a kiss . . .

Kalemegdan: Beograd

Beside the battlements
where the living defenders
joined the dead
still fighting
to defend their walls
lovers today
fondle and embrace
as the Sava takes
the arm of the Danube
to go together
into the bliss of some black sea
here the city was built
here children will be born

stopped by a tree and looked to the river. An odd car went by towards Dublin.

Why this need to run? Even as he was thinking that, a saying of his father returned: 'Idleness is the thief of time.' That statement had been flayed upon him as a child but with time as he lived in England among fields of oak trees that statement had changed; time itself had become the culprit, the thief.

And the image of time as a thief was forever embroiled in a particular ikon of his father's, that of a pacifist who ran through Dublin helping the wounded in 1916, was arrested, was shot dead with a deaf and dumb youth. And that man, more than anybody, was Liam's hero, an Irish pacifist, a pacifist born of his father's revolution, a pacifist born of his father's state.

He returned home quickly, drew the door on his father. He sat down.

'Remember, Daddy, the story you told me about the pacifist shot dead in 1916 with a deaf and dumb youth, the man whose wife was a feminist?'

'Yes.'

'Well, I was just thinking that he's the sort of man we need now, one who comes from a revolution but understands it in a different way, a creative way, who understands that change isn't born from violence but intense and self-sacrificing acts.'

His father understood what he was saying, that there was a remnant of 1916 that was relevant and urgent now, that there had been at least one man among the men of 1916 who could speak to the present generation and show them that guns were not diamonds, that blood was precious, that birth most poignantly issues from restraint.

Liam went to bed. In the middle of the night he woke muttering to himself, 'May God have mercy on your soul', although his father was not yet dead but he wasn't asking God to have mercy on his father's soul but on the soul of Ireland, the many souls born out of his father's statelet, the women never pregnant, the cruel and violent priests, the young exiles, the old exiles, those who would never come back.

He got up, walked down the stairs, opened the door on his father's room. Inside his father lay. He wanted to see this with his own eyes, hope even in the persuasion of death.

He returned to bed.

His wife turned away from him but curiously that did not hurt him because he was thinking of the water rising, the moon on the water and as he thought of these things geese clanked over, throwing their reflections into the water grazed with moon which rimmed this town, the church towers, the slate roofs, those that slept now, those who didn't remember.

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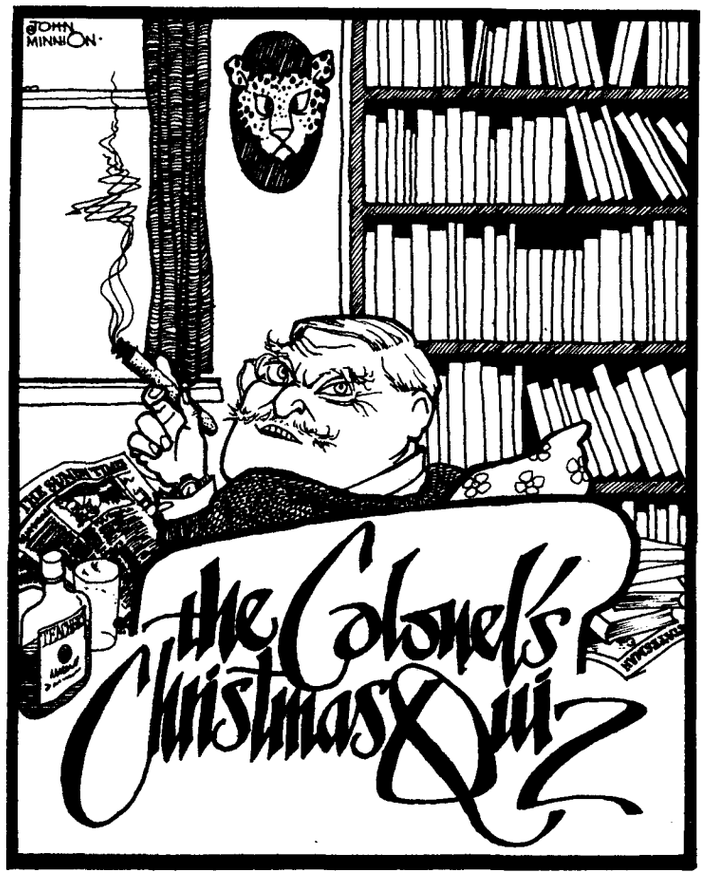


I thought it was a pretty rum do when this chappie Page rang me up and asked me to set a quiz for his rag. Rather a left-wing sort of show, I gather. But I thought, well, it takes all sorts and it *is* Christmas, peace on earth and good will all round, don't you know? Then he mentioned that there might a few bottles of best malt in it and times being what they are – gift horses not as common as they were in my younger days... And after all, as I was saying at the club the other day, if you're not the type for healthy walks, there's nothing better for getting the Christmas pud down than sending the old brain-cells on a route march. A crossword with the port, game of *Cluedo* by the log fire, that sort of thing. So why not a quiz? Anyway, upshot was I took the jolly exercise on. Pretty damn perceptive of them to come to me when you think about it. Just the sort of cove they need really, with my long experience of the world.

So I toddled along to the library, got out a few reference books and started bunging together a few simple questions. Which province is Poona in? Which two institutions amalgamated to make the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst? Describe the ribbon for the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal. That sort of thing. But then I was having a bit of a chinwag with a few of the lads at the local – like to show the flag there Sunday lunchtimes – and they pointed out that you had to make allowances for the younger generation, especially lefties – wouldn't have had the education we had – lack the spirit of application – gaps in their knowledge – got to show a bit of charity at Christmas. So, not being narrow-minded, I ordered a few of the younger members of the family on parade and we fudged together a little effort that I think should keep you chaps pretty well on the alert for an hour or two.

Answers on p. 1016

Out of the mouths

Who said in 1979

1) 'I used to say that politics was the second oldest profession, and I have come to know that it bears a great similarity to the first'?
2) 'We need beauty queens more than politicians'?
3) 'I say I don't sleep with married men, but what I really mean is that I don't sleep with happily married men'?
4) 'I believe that marriage is the quickest way to ruin a relationship'?
5) 'I'm married. I care very deeply about my wife and my children, and we've, we have a rather special set of circumstances which is perhaps somewhat unique but we're – I think we're making substantial progress'?
6) 'It doesn't necessarily follow that noblemen behave in a particularly noble manner towards their wives'?
7) 'I personally reserve the right to laugh at opera'?
8) 'You cannot sing La Traviata in a mini-skirt'?
9) 'I don't like baths. I don't enjoy them in the slightest and, if I could, I'd prefer to go around dirty'?
10) 'I believe everyone on a Sunday morning wants to read a bit of dirt'?

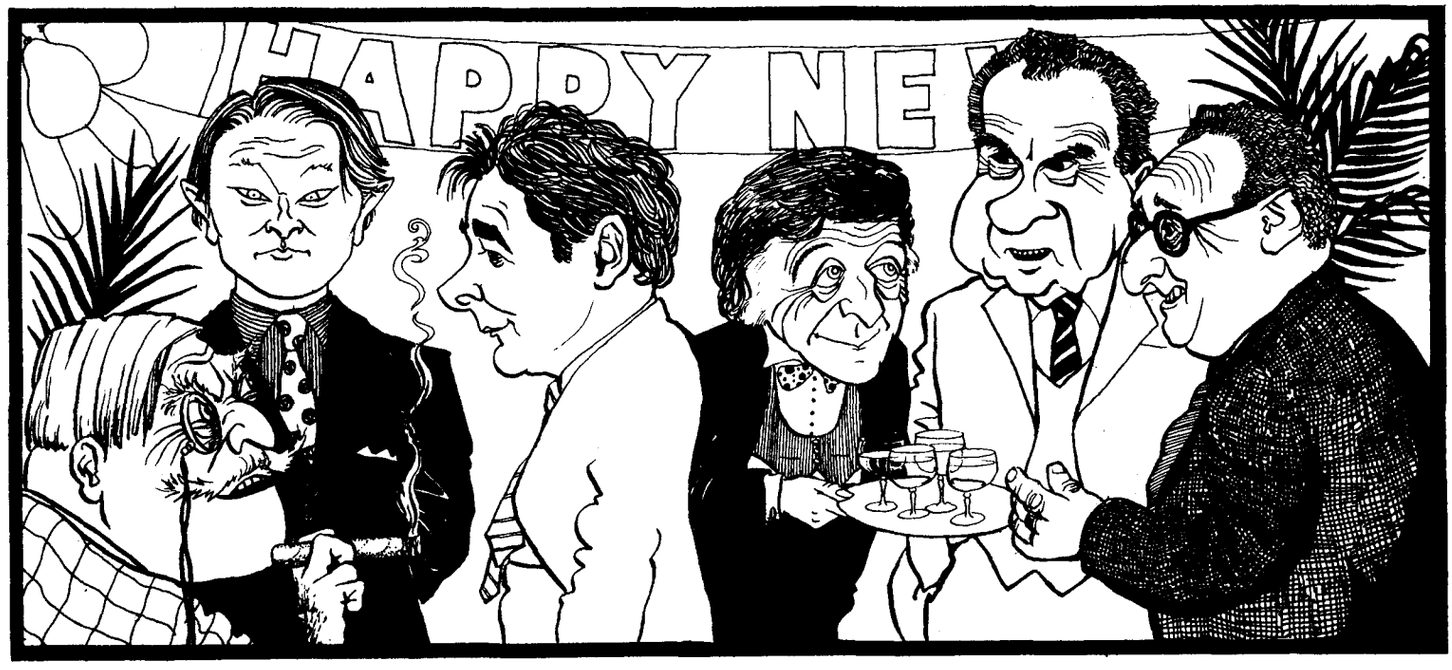
Golden oldies

Twenty years ago

1) Who was too young to perceive the incapacities of youth?
2) Who thought that acquaintance was both necessary and sufficient condition for affection?
3) Who was bothered by the taste-retaining powers of a glutinous substance?
4) Who took the gospel of rock 'n' roll to Moscow?
5) Which unlikely creature was at liberty in whose domicile?
6) Who envisaged his woman as an animated plaything?
7) Who castigated himself for his own lack of intelligence?
8) Who had a new emotional experience as a result of osculatory contact?
9) Was driven to distraction by a certain facial expression?
10) Who decided that the topic under discussion was no longer of any consequence?

Gamesmanship

1) What's the game of the steel-city pirates?
2) Which racqueteer do you associate with the chemical industry?



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3) Top of the league three times, but just missed the Cup three out of four times before the first world war. Who were they?
4) Which recently married Kiplingesque character is superb in bars and on horses?
5) Who plays Currie Cup games other than South Africa?

How many

1) Tintinnabulated to extinction?
2) Created a driving hazard while embracing Fred?
3) Didn't kill Sir Aaron?
4) Chased Sylvia in Milan?
5) Changed their designation in the interests of racial harmony?
6) Passed by in isolated Macondo?

The way you look

1) Which poor wretch spent a 17th-century Christmas day undressed until ten at night?
2) Who wrote of what, 'I remember several ladies, who were once very near seven foot high, that at present want some inches of five'.
3) Who found a lack of sartorial polish sexy?
4) He had 'hair cropped as close as the closest stubble... hardly any eyebrows... no eyelashes, and eyes of a red-brown, so unsheltered and unshaded that I remember wondering how he went to sleep...' Who was he?
5) Who had 'a Roman nose, and a turban and was as tall as a grenadier'?
6) Whose bum was the greatest thing about him?
7) Who said 'There's never a new fashion but it's old'?

Place to place

What do the following have in common?
1) Boston, Skye, Norwich, Manchester
2) Genoa, Banbury, Madeira, Pontefract
3) Montgomery, Lincoln, Richmond, Dover
4) Yarmouth, Dover, Blundeston, Canterbury
5) Virginia, Edinburgh, Limerick, Perth
6) New York, Oslo, Istanbul, Bratislava
7) Venice, Penzance, Westminster, Japan
8) Hebrides, Hampshire, Brighton, Jersey
9) Paris, Oxford, Leningrad, London
10) Chelsea, Greenwich, Richmond, Soho

Passing on

Among those who died in 1979, who
1) was, on his mother's side, Ford Madox Brown's great-grandson?
2) was, on his mother's side, Queen Victoria's great-grandson?
3) was born in Kiev and later became an ambassador in Moscow?
4) was born in Sind and later became a lecturer at Southampton University?
5) was the youngest MP elected to the Commons in 1917, and later became a Fleet Street editor?
6) was the youngest MP elected at the 1929 general election, and later became a Fleet Street editor?
7) was originally named Marion Michael Morrison?
8) was originally named Gladys Mary Smith?
9) wrote *English: A Course For Human Beings*?
10) wrote *Basic English and its Uses*?

Gentle reader

A. In which recent novel
1) does a woman working on an Inland Waterways magazine become entangled with a writer of obscene literature?
2) is a girl named after Rosa Luxemburg?
3) has a girl castrated her own father?
4) is a Belgian professor's wife beaten round the bend?
5) is the devoted wife of an aged Greek not what she seems?

B. In which literary work
1) is a man put in gaol for a night without his wife caring?
2) is a man's emotional development ruined by his having been given a bicycle in the interests of love?
3) is a man strait-jacketed by his old nurse?
4) does a man lay his bride in a grave while sleepwalking?
5) does a man meet a long-lost male friend and girl-friend all in one?

Dating

1) Which important document was re-issued three times before 1300?
2) What came in in 1940 and what went out again in 1954?
3) Which politician purchased shares in what in 1875?
4) Why was St Albans in the news in 1455?
5) Which eight-year affair was resolved in France in 1783?
6) Who found the source of what in 1770?
7) What was made legal in this country in 1969?
8) Who invented which helpful device in 1815?
9) Who got over-heated in 1555?
10) What began in 1884 and still meets today?
11) What dissolved itself in 1660?
12) Whose balance of mind was disturbed in 1453?

Symbolic

1) Whose bee sting was not as bad as the wounds he inflicted on others?
2) Who had hair like snow-white wool and held seven stars?
3) Who was embraced so closely that his own nature changed?
4) Which castrating instrument marks the passage of time?
5) Which twins were hatched from eggs as a result of a strange union?
6) Which medieval seven are represented as women holding what?
7) Who was born from the wrong anatomical part of the wrong parent?
8) What gave comfort to whom by becoming wet one night and remaining dry the next?

On the wing

Who or what is
1) H. Bird?
2) J. Sparrow?
3) M. Jay?
4) S. Raven?
5) E. O. Parrott?
6) A. Coote?
7) *Crow*?
8) *Magpie*?
9) A Robin's eye?
10) A Double Eagle?
11) The Shrike?

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

John Coleman

Moguls & Brats

King Kong's great arm bursts down through the black ceiling, paw curled round a life-size dummy of Fay Wray, one white shoe on, the other forlorn on the floor. Don't touch. High on the wall, a little screen finds the ape straddling the Empire State, batting fretfully at insect-like planes, over and over again. Forge on, ignoring the NO TRESPASSING sign on those scaled-down gates bearing the simple, ominous K. The blue neon letters of 'The Twilight Room' beckon: over the padded leatherette bar in the corner, the engraved phiz of Bogey – among a host of familiars – sparkles dimly on the mirror. A clip or two from *Mildred Pierce* flickers nearby, with Miss Crawford contemplating suicide by water, concentrating on her Oscar. Suddenly, the travelling eye meets the underside of a swimming pool, a clothed corpse greenly fixed and floating, while just ahead – on yet another of many screens – Norma Desmond makes her grand, mad, mesmerised descent of a staircase into the arms of her Public, the ghoulish press. A nice irony, then, that it's but a step to the curtains definitively marked THE EXIT.

Outside, in the quotidian sobriety of the V&A, a time to consult notes, collect thoughts, thumb back through the catalogue, which turns out to be an excellent read in its own right, restoring perspective. Organised by Thames Television, 'The Art of Hollywood' exhibition currently installed out at South Kensington and running till 24 January is a must for anyone remotely interested in art direction in the movies. It aims to span 50 years and the work of nine men: Wilfred Buckland (the daddy of them all), Ben Carré, Anton Grot, Hans Dreier, Charles D. Hall, Cedric Gibbons, Van Nest Polglase, Richard Day and William Cameron Menzies, most of them also distinguished for longevity: the painterly Carré outlived the lot, dying only last year at the age of 94. Invited to contribute a foreword to the finely illustrated catalogue, Orson Welles characteristically puts a King Kong fist through things: 'Menzies is the only name on your list I could enthuse over.' Heads of art departments were basically bureaucrats and (of Polglase, usually assigned top art credit for *Citizen Kane*) 'if he ever designed anything himself, I never saw it'. The devisers and producers of the V&A show accept this in good part and partly accept it, making important distinctions between, say, Gibbons at MGM and such brilliant creators as Day – who started with the fabulous Monte Carlo set for *Foolish Wives* – and the freelancing genius, Menzies.

Some of the fun and games on display (a miniature pair of curly-trunked Babylonian elephants, a lonely-looking replica of the 1936 *Romeo and Juliet* balcony, the *Sunset Boulevard* floater) prove frankly distracting; other near-gimmicks, like the black-and-white keyboard carpet and Art Deco door, genuinely add to the prime purpose of informing. The meat of the matter, after all, is first on the walls: the sketches, architectural drawings, diagrams, colour paintings and detailed storyboards, together with such historic irreplaceables as an old postcard going to confirm that a mysterious Walter L. Hall was mainly responsible for the incredible sets for *Intolerance*; second, in the well-chosen film excerpts running on a score of screens, designers' fantasies realised. A pity that my childish delight in models could not be satisfied, but Hollywood has been notoriously wanton with its memorabilia.

All the more reason, then, to welcome another Thames TV initiative, their long-promised documentary series on the silent cinema, directed by Kevin Brownlow in collaboration with David Gill and due to begin on 8 January. Meanwhile, there is Brownlow's superb book based on the series, *Hollywood: The Pioneers* (Collins £7.95), a visual banquet thanks to the hundreds of period photographs, mostly stills of magnificent quality and rarity drawn by John Kobal from his own awesome collection. This is one to cherish, not least because Brownlow's informed enthusiasm enlivens every paragraph of the text. 'The route,' he suggests, 'is well worn': maybe, but he traverses it with a difference. Hospitalised, Mary Astor at last agreed to an interview on camera: the next day, she was allowed home. A stuntman, Harvey Parry, dispelled an old myth: 'I doubled Harold Lloyd – who couldn't stand heights'. As for early morality, '"I wore twenty-eight costumes," said Betty Blythe, of her part as *The Queen of Sheba* (1921), "and if I put them on all at once, I couldn't keep warm"'. Yet only eight years before that, it still held that no motion picture theatre was allowed within 200 feet of a church.

Another pioneer, for once home grown, was soundly celebrated back in February with the publication of Forsyth Hardy's rewarding life of a fellow Scot, *John Grierson: A Documentary Biography* (Faber £7.95), affectionate research at its best. Grierson was a bustler, sometimes a bully, always a goad and inspiration. His own *Drifters* worried the Empire Marketing Board's Film Committee so much they insisted on cuts, which were made. Approval won, Grierson spliced back the offending bits and showed the result to the Film Society, with Eisenstein present and to acclaim. The following month it opened at the huge Stoll in Kingsway: that was a December exactly 50 years ago. The career is all there – the GPO Film Unit, his establishment of the

Randolph Stow
VISITANTS
Winner of The Patrick White Award 1979

"Brief and intense, *Visitants* invites – and stands up to – a comparison with the fiction of Joseph Conrad, the master of tropical anguish . . . Few writers combine such elegance with such force." *Mark Abley,* **NOW!**

"Mr Stow never wastes a word or an image . . . His book is less than 200 pages long; and yet, at the close of it, one seems oneself to have trudged the jungle paths, cringed at the offer of bats as a delicacy at a banquet and endured the terrifying climax of primitive blood-letting . . . There are few stronger or more original talents in fiction today."
Francis King, **Spectator**
£5.50

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National Film Board of Canada in 1939, the spell at UNESCO, the relative disaster of Group 3 back in Britain, later work as presenter of TV's *This Wonderful World* (researched by the indomitable, still-missed Olwen Vaughan) and at an initially rebellious McGill University, where he outfaced the more loutish dissidents. Hardy has the good sense to quote Grierson at length and frequently, but perhaps my favourite account of the man in action – ego, earthiness, epicureanism and all – is Molly Plowright's brilliantly funny contribution about a fraught evening together at the Doge's Palace in 1956. 'I am Grierson,' he kept shouting, submerged in a celebrity-hungry crowd. He was: founding father of a movement on which the dust of controversy is unlikely to settle.

On the domestic scene, that is. William Wolf's *Landmark Films* (Paddington Press £6.95) gives Grierson brief credit for first applying the word 'documentary' to the cinema – probably taking it from the French – during a review of Robert Flaherty's *Moana* in the New York *Sun* in 1926. Wolf himself is discussing *Nanook of the North*, one of his 38 chosen key-movies of all time; his notion of singling out landmarks not merely for individual review but as items he can then festoon with instant observations on technique, genres, national cinemas, 'break-throughs' (i.e. *Breathless, Easy Rider, Deep Throat*), stars and directors is not in itself a bad one; it is rather the tameness of his perceptions and the leadenness of his language that mark this as a redundant exercise. It reads like an Annual Report written by a film publicist. Its significance here is that GB is simply represented by *The 39 Steps, Room at the Top, Dr Strangelove* and *Ulysses*, four movies of which one is a Hitchcock and two others are American-directed: that would seem to leave Jack Clayton, more recently known for the 1974 *The Great Gatsby*, as sole wielder of a tattered Union Jack.

This emphasis is realistically borne out by the remainder of my end-of-year-batch. At least *Hollywood Goes to War* (Routledge £9.75), or 'Films and American Society 1939-52', shares with several of them the virtue of British authorship. Colin Shindler got a First in History and this witty, consquential study shows why. He is concerned to examine the to-fro relationship of political exigencies and, until television supplanted it, the most formidable medium of mass entertainment, cinema. Setting off in the late Thirties, Shindler digs up some startling data. We took badly to the word 'bum' for 'tramp', and in 1937 Japan told the American industry off for a movie which permitted a policeman to eat a naked banana in public. More seriously, Hitler's Germany began banning US product suspected of featuring Jews, though how Mae West, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers made this list is a mystery. Later on, we were to get hot under the collar about *The Story of GI Joe* and, most famously, *Objective Burma*. But, up to the boom year of 1946 and beyond, Hollywood thrived: 'it was jokily asserted that even good pictures made money.'

As a postscript to this fascinating unravelling of a great muddle, Howard Koch's *As Time Goes By* (Harcourt Brace Jovanich £5.95) is worth a dip into. The oddly ingenuous but pleasant Mr Koch, in a gentle autobiography, tells how he became one of the HUAC's second-team 'nine' for having scripted the very weird *Mission to Moscow* and adds first-hand knowledge to Shindler's scarifying account in the process. Even if a four-year sojourn in England seems to have left Koch believing Aneurin Bevan to have been a former prime minister, the writer of *Sergeant York, Casablanca* and *Letter to an Unknown Woman* clearly has something going for him. We leave him, happily philosophising in nonconformist Woodstock.

Of sterner stuff is Michael Pye and Linda Myles's *The Movie Brats: How The Film Generation Took Over Hollywood* (Faber £5.25), which picks up chronologically around where Colin Shindler ends. The aim is large and concisely put: 'We want to take you inside the "private grammar" of the movies – to see how deals are assembled, how films are made, who has the power and how they use it.' Moguls out, brats in, grossly to simplify the authors' persuasive thesis; and their 'brats' are six: Francis Coppola, George Lucas, Brian DePalma, John Milius (*Big Wednesday*? oh, my), Martin Scorsese and Steven Spielberg, who 'form a tribe, with shared gods and idols. Their careers, their films, even their private lives overlap.' A little too much of this inbred matter, perhaps, and there is a whiff of fan-club hysteria behind the cool and useful presentation of economic realities. Ultimately what the not-quite-so-new boys now have in common would seem good old blinding ambition: elsewhere, they diverge. But read and mark this bold book, however much you inwardly reject. Not *all* the American directors of recent substance crawled out from under Roger Corman's overcoat, did they?

Half-a-dozen final recommendations, beginning with Barry Norman's *The Hollywood Greats* (Hodder/BBC £7.50) and not just because it has that magic H-word again in the title. You saw the TV portraits of 'Norman's Ten' (Gable, Flynn, Tracy, Cooper, Bogart, Crawford, Colman, Harlow, Garland and Laughton) and some of you got right churned up, apparently. Well, Barry is properly unrepentant and here they come between covers, preserved in judicious and sprightly prose. For those who read with a jumping-dot finger, there is the consolation of a big handful of pictures. Tom Dardis's *Keaton: The Man Who Wouldn't Lie Down* (Deutsch £6.50) may lack the sprawling geniality of Rudi Blesh's Life but is unequivocally the most authoritative, best researched work on my preferred actor/director to date, notably strong on what happened after *Spite Marriage* and the transition to sound. Patricia Bosworth's *Montgomery Clift* (Sidgwick £7.95 & Bantam £1.95) is not to be confused with the standard scissors-and-paste job. The author really has done a vast amount of homework and digested it thoroughly before sitting down to write. When not glacially exhilarating, it must have been horrendous to be Clift.

For buffs, question-masters and reviewers chasing a deadline, Leslie Halliwell's compendious *Film Guide* (Granada £15) has just emerged in a second edition: some outstanding silents and foreign-language movies now make the grade and the compiler's rating system is as infuriating as ever. On the same shelf might well lean a couple by Roy Pickard: *A Companion to the Movies* (Muller £8.95), revised and updated, a handy reference work

Among this week's contributors:

S. NYAMFUKUDZA was born in Salisbury, Rhodesia. His novel *The Non-Believer's Journey* will be appearing in late summer 1980.

DESMOND HOGAN was born in County Galway and now lives in London. His collection of stories *The Diamond at the Bottom of the Sea* was published earlier this year, and a new novel *The Leaves on Grey* comes out next spring.

FRANK KEATING is sports columnist for the *Guardian*.

DAVID MERCER's plays include *After Haggerty, Flint* and *Duck Song*. He has also written for films and television.

DAVID BENEDICTUS's most recent novel *A Twentieth-Century Man* was published earlier this year.

NIGEL LEWIS has worked for the BBC since 1970. He was co-founder in 1972 of *The Arts Worldwide*, a radio current affairs programme about the arts outside Britain.

Jurek Becker
SLEEPLESS DAYS

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Hermione Lee, **Observer**

"This mild, witty, beautifully manoeuvred book."
Hilary Bailey, **Guardian**

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specialising in film genres; and the novel and nifty *Who Played Who in the Movies: An A-Z* (Muller £9.75), offering 14 Fausts, 10 Tarzans and 16 Queen Victorias – these just the speaking ones. Our Mr Brownlow could reel you off the mutes.

Godfrey Hodgson

Rough Rider

The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt by EDMUND MORRIS *Collins* £8.50

A master of foxhounds, says Trollope, who studied hunting, as he studied politics, as a field of action for human egotism, must be at once 'savage and yet good humoured'. And he adds that the successful master must 'so train his heart as to feel for the fox a mingled tenderness and cruelty which is inexplicable to ordinary men and women'.

Theodore Roosevelt was never a master of foxhounds, though the idea is not as incongruous as it might sound. The future Rough Rider did ride to hounds, and in a pink coat, on Long Island. On one occasion he remounted and finished the hunt after a fall that snapped his arm and left it dangling like a liverwurst by his side, and left blood pouring down his face 'like the walls of a slaughterhouse'. And that was pansy stuff compared to some of the feats in the Montana Badlands he described in *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman*, which include tracking armed Indian outlaws in the snow, and single combat with a wounded grizzly.

All his life Roosevelt displayed this mixture of tenderness and cruelty towards animals and towards the natural creation generally. As a child, he collected bugs and birds of every description; as a teenager he shot everything that moved. And this ambivalence towards animals reflected more general contrasts in his personality: savagery and good humour, the soldier and the scholar, the crass politician and the creative statesman, all sharing a body that was itself a paradox.

Crass he could certainly be. 'During the past century,' he wrote, 'a good deal of sentimental nonsense has been talked about our taking the Indians' land.' At the time he wrote that, he owned a ranch house on the Little Missouri on land that had been taken from the Indians not 20 years earlier. In 1897, as assistant secretary of the navy, he unscrupulously and probably unconstitutionally took advantage of an elderly superior's long summer holiday to make preparations for war with Spain and for seizing Cuba and the Philippines.

He worked for war, and at times it sounded as if he worshipped war. When he came back from Cuba a national hero for his blind courage in the charge up San Juan Hill, he brandished a large pistol and bragged to the reporters that he had vowed to kill at least one Spaniard with it, and that he had kept his vow.

He was, it has to be said, a snob, a bully and a killer. He was also a great deal more than that.

He was, for a start, remarkably well educated. His intellectual capacities were extraordinary. He could write, and write well, astonishingly fast. When in the White House he wrote to the wife of one of his closest friends, Henry Cabot Lodge, the following note:

> Can you have me to dinner either Wednesday or Friday? . . . Then we could discuss the Hittite empire, the Pithecanthropus, and Magyar love songs, and the exact relations of the Atli of the Volsunga Saga to the Etzel of the Nibelungelied, and of both to Attila – with interludes by Cabot about the rate bill.

That wasn't show-off; the note was not meant to be read by anyone except Nannie Lodge. Roosevelt – he detested being called 'Teddy,' by the way, because he thought it undignified, but put up with it because it was a politician's trademark – wrote successful biographies, books on naval history, ornithology, the westward expansion of the United States, politics, and big game hunting. He was at home with experts on strategy, forestry, Greek drama, cowpunching, metaphysics, English history, and American football.

Vast as it is, this superb biography rides along at his saddlebow only as far as his accession to the presidency, in his 43rd year. In it, Roosevelt appears, not as the 'first of the American Caesars' he was to become in the White House, but rather as a tantalising hybrid between Nietzsche's *uebermensch*, incarnation of pure will, and some infuriatingly accomplished young American gentleman out of Henry James.

Edmund Morris is too subtle and faithful a biographer to allow himself the crude 'explanations' of psychohistory. Yet it is plain that many of the clues to Roosevelt's divided self lie in the struggle of that Nietzschean will with what started out as a very puny and sickly little body; and that further clues lead back to that sickly child's feelings about his father, a man of godlike grace, health and beauty until he died, of cancer in appalling agony, when Theodore junior was a student at Harvard.

It was Theodore Roosevelt, in the White House, who, more than anyone else, led the United States to world power; on the road, if you like, to Vietnam and Cambodia, but also on the road to the saving of Western Europe from Hitler and Stalin. He was the creator of the modern presidency; the first to understand the strength the presidency might draw from its position as the only office to which a man could be elected as 'President of all the people'. And it was TR who saw that the key to making the office work lay in communicating directly with the American people through manipulation of the media; and no American politician, not even cousin Frank, ever did that more skilfully.

Edmund Morris shows how Roosevelt had already started reaching over the heads of the elected legislators even when he was 'boy governor' of New York. In that technique lay the germ of FDR's 'fireside chats,' and of modern Presidents' use of television.

I am looking forward to the second volume of this outstandingly enjoyable biography. It is meticulously researched, solidly structured, written vividly and with sensitivity. Its ending, which I will not spoil for you, is a small masterpiece.

Collins deserve credit for publishing it, well illustrated, for what must now be regarded as the reasonable price of £8.50. Give it to your favourite person for Christmas. But read it yourself first.

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From Snowdon's **Personal View**, recently published by *Weidenfeld*

Gillian Wilce

Rub and Bump

Another Part of the Wood by BERYL BAINBRIDGE *Duckworth* £4.95

'It was as if they had all been plucked up out of nowhere, and set down with the express purpose of being amusing or interesting or something, and they had all been found wanting. It was so embarrassing, not knowing what way to be . . .' Reflecting on the evening gathering in one of the wooden huts at the Nant MacFarley camp a participant sums up the main matter of *Another Part of the Wood*. The camp is presided over by the physically large, but otherwise little defined George, son of the absent, paternalist MacFarleys whose brain-child it is. The assembled guests are an odd and chance mixture – George's acne-ed protegé, Balfour, Joseph with his woman Dotty, his son and his own protege. the mentally-deficient Kidney, plus Lionel and May, invited during a casual meeting in a pub.

Their few days together are described with acuity; they are shown to be narrow, blind, selfish, strange and yet dreadfully ordinary. In fact, thoughts attributed to them (like the one quoted above) sometimes go beyond what you believe the characters to be capable of seeing, sound rather like the authorial voice displaced. One other small complaint is that the occasional flaw in style causes a hiccup in concentration. A sentence like 'a flux of tears came into Kidney's sparkling eyes', for example, sidetracks you into wondering about words themselves. Maybe these few roughnesses come from the fact that this is a rewriting of a novel first published in the Sixties.

The campers are made to talk, however, in a way that always convinces utterly. Irritating habits of speech – 'The little woman loves her sweeties' – niggle away at already strained relationships. There is plenty of this all-too-lifelike talking, but little listening. Pits of incomprehension lurk between people. Balfour desperately needs to confide in George about his excruciatingly embarrassing night spent in the same hut as Lionel and May, but knows before he speaks that he won't be heard. Dotty writes hopeless letters to an ever-retreating Joseph. There is holding in thrall and being held in thrall; moments of concern for others say more about power than they do about affection. George worries about Balfour as over a reluctantly-kept pet; Joseph's rush of plans for the development of Kidney has staled into boredom. The prevailing emotions are, in fact, boredom, embarrassment and irritation, engendered as people rub and bump against each other while pursuing their own obsessions in a confined space. In addition, there are all the small practicalities of camp life, real enough to make you wince: arguments about teeth-cleaning, the surreptitious disposal of dirty underwear, the problem of peeing at night when the chemical lavatory is far away in the dark.

This is not as dispiriting as it may all sound. The acuteness of the observation has entertainment value and also makes for a detachment from the characters which means that you don't actually care very much on their behalf. There are some moments of exhilaration. Dotty and Lionel particularly have a capacity for happiness, even if it wilts when exposed to the others.

Nevertheless, Beryl Bainbridge's skill remains above all in establishing an intimate relationship between the ordinary and the horrible. Not only is much ordinariness, when ruthlessly treated, pretty horrible in itself, but also it is out of banal things that the sad, yet unGothic, ending of the book grows. The concluding event is not a towering finale to an inevitable, foreseen process; it is not any one person's fault. Rather it is the culmination of misunderstanding, thoughtless teasing, failure to listen and selfish pre-occupation. And it brings not the catharsis of tragedy, but only 'a general exodus, a dispersal into the landscape, a journey into another part of the wood'.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Arts Worldwide

NIGEL LEWIS, co-founder of the BBC programme, begins a new series in the NS

THE YEAR-LONG FEUD between the West German film-director Werner Herzog and the Aguaruna Indians of northern Peru finally came to a head early on the morning of 1 December when some 200 of the Indians – brandishing shot-guns, spears, and machetes – ambushed Herzog's camp on the banks of the Cenapa River.

Anyone reading the brief account of the raid in *The Times* might be forgiven for assuming that Herzog was the innocent victim of some jungle rough-stuff. The reality is quite different: the feud was started by Herzog, and the question now is whether, once he has gone, it will escalate into a trial of strength between the Indians and the Peruvian army.

Herzog was making a film called *Fitzcarraldo,* starring Jack Nicholson as a ruthless rubber baron of the last century. His location was an area of Peru where, because of border disputes with Ecuador, many soldiers are stationed. Frequently there is friction between Indians and soldiers, and occasional flare-ups, after which the soldiers mete out punishments such as forcing the Indians to do some work for no return. It was because of this and a history of such abuses – including those perpetrated by Fitzcarraldo himself – that the Aguaruna, two years ago, set up a council to look after their ethnic interests. Against the express wishes of this council, but with the consent of the military, Herzog pitched his camp on Aguaruna land. It was this deadlock that led to the raid.

Trucks, film equipment, and a carpentry workshop were smashed and set on fire – damage estimated at £40,000. But no one was hurt. Building workers on the site were sent away, and the production team, shaken but safe, was allowed to leave for the town of Iquitos, 80 miles away.

Commenting on the raid, the anthropologist John Hemming says, 'I can promise you that Indians don't attack unless they're very badly provoked'. In this case, the provocation began in February, when representatives of the production company – it is called Wildlife Films – arrived at the Aguaruna village community of Waiwaim. Producing a permit signed by a Peruvian colonel, they said they would need provisions, temporary building space, and a thousand extras – the men with hair as long as possible. The Aguaruna refused, on grounds that were partly practical, partly a matter of principle. As John Hemming puts it, 'How would *we* feel if a film-director came and told us all to dress up as morris-dancers?' Also, they preserved a strong tribal memory of Fitzcarraldo, and weren't any too happy at the idea of a film about him. The council backed up the community, with a reminder to the government in Lima that a refusal was entirely within its rights.

Then in July, Waiwaim was visited again by Wildlife representatives, together with four soldiers from the nearby garrison. This time force was used. The senior officer insulted the Indians, fired shots into the roof of the community hall, and finally, say the Indians,

> with threats, insults, and maltreatments, brought about the forcible signature of a document favouring the film firm. In this contract, the community had to agree to co-operate, a work-plan was dictated, new authorities for the community were set up, and the pay for extras was reduced from 1,000 to 300 *soles* daily.

Later, four community spokesmen were arrested and imprisoned.

It was on these terms that Herzog pitched his camp. One reason for his extraordinary high-handedness, or at any rate his acquiescence in high-handedness carried out on his behalf, might be simply the money and schedule worries that have turned many a director into a dictator. As the Indians say, 'We now know that Fitzcarraldo and Herzog resemble each other'. They might have added that Herzog is acting not unlike the dynamic psychotic who dominates his only previous film venture in Peru – *Aguirre, Wrath of God.* The anthropologist Stephen Corry, author of a forthcoming book on the Peruvian Indian tribes, remarks: 'He's tampering with something very dangerous. If provoked too much, the Aguaruna are very capable of violence. They have a history of it.'

* * *

IN THE THIRD WEEK of November, churchgoing Germany observes no fewer than three days of national mourning, and in that week the country's cultural life is also suitably at half-mast and in black.

In Berlin, the florists' shops and small stalls outside the cemeteries were doing a roaring trade in wreaths of flowers and fir. (Someone joked that the fir was from the thousands of trees chopped down the week before at the British aerodrome, 'so that the British bombers' bellies wouldn't get tickled', as one paper put it.) The cemeteries themselves were unusually crowded with the quick – old ladies all in black, trailing their children and grandchildren. In a laundry, a transistor played mournful music, and a black American soldier pulled up at one of the cemetery-stalls thinking it was selling slices of melon.

I arrived on *Heldengedenktag* – Heroes' Remembrance Day – the day of mourning for the war dead which is more popularly known as *Volkstrauertag*: People's Mourning Day. That evening, with an audience almost as black as the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, I was at the Philharmonie to hear Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem.* The following Sunday, there was *Totentag* – 'Skeleton Sunday', as one of my Berlin friends calls it – the end of the church year, the start of Advent, and the day on which *all* the dead are remembered, heroes and cowards alike. I wondered why the *Eroica* was on the programme: surely it was more appropriate for Heroes' Remembrance Day? Then I remembered the second movement – the funeral march – and realised that in the work all the week's variations on mourning were resumed, just as they had been stated at the beginning of the week in *Ein Deutsches Requiem.* The two works would have been more appropriately programmed the other way round, but the *Eroica* on the day of the war dead might have been misunderstood as flag-waving nationalism.

As it was, the orchestra had been in the wars. The Berlin newspapers carried daily reports on the two players who had fallen from the 'plane in China, and Karajan came out limping – some said a skiing- or mountaineering-accident, some said a stroke. He was given a hero's welcome.

Bridging the two Sundays was the third day of mourning – *Buss Und Bet Tag* – Prayer and Repentance Day, when the Philharmonic was the setting for a performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion.* It also happened to be the anniversary of the death of the Prussian playwright Heinrich von Kleist, and I spent the afternoon with a friend in the glade where Kleist shot himself, close by his tomb overlooking the Wannsee.

It was that kind of week. A man with no one to mourn was no one that week in Berlin. I thought of the line from *Ein Deutsches Requiem* – 'Selig sind die toten', 'blessed are the dead' – and remembered the last time I'd been at that spot: in the distance were the sounds of American army exercises, like the ghosts of the gunshots that Kleist had fired there in earnest.

Television

Julian Barnes

Gullible

The year's end habitually tempts viewers into rage and despair: at the 71 films promised over Christmas; at the year's interrupted service; at the effluvial offerings of the fireside Cloaca Maxima. This column's seasonal musing on the matter will now appear in a fortnight; in the meantime, those wallowing in doubt about the quality of British television are instructed to watch the current cricket series from Australia and to give thanks that Kerry Packer's Channel Nine as yet has no foothold in this country.

Not even the fronting presence of the sagacious if blinkless Richie Benaud can disguise the roughness of the coverage, the guiltless pandering to mere audience size, the hypocrisy of appearing to cover cricket and yet getting away from the cricket at every possible opportunity. No girl in the crowd can safely unwrap her bikini top without Packer's camera zooming roguishly in on her; no avian wanderer from the Indian Ocean can alight on the field of play without a cheeky caption coming up on the screen announcing 'C. Gull' (a subsequent and even more ribtickling version goes 'C. Gull – out for a Duck').

These are perhaps just irritating frills, though, which it doesn't do to get too priggish about. What matters is when Channel Nine starts screwing the cricket. The opening cre-

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dits make it clear that their view of the game is essentially gladiatorial (helmets, snorting fast bowlers, macho muscles); and the rest of the coverage shows about the same degree of thoughtfulness. The commentary team is based on the hopeful assumption that more commentators means better commentators; it doesn't (Tony Grieg in particular approaches chat in the same reckless over-the-top-for-six-or-out fashion that he once approached batting).

Action replays are based on the same principle of accumulation: other channels offer one slow-motion repeat, so we'll have two. Few shots or dismissals show up better for being seen from three different angles (one is always a dud), and the technique infuriates: for instance, when Hughes, on 99, was caught by Brearley off Underwood, this bit of reflex square-leg wizardry by England's Solomon managed to be missed by all three cameras; the producer duly decided that we should miss the action again in slow-motion, first from behind the bowler's arm, then from the batsman's viewpoint, and then from over the heads of the slips. One early transmission even contained a flashing-display educational clip explaining what a bouncer was; a very pained Fred Trueman had to handle the voiceover. Only the loyal dream of seeing England smack and wheedle their way to victory (an unlikely occurrence at the time of writing) compels one's attention.

'Show off your Colgate grin – but from the heart.' This winning oriental paradox was uttered during the final episode of *Diamonds in the Sky* (BBC-2) by the bunny-mother of a group of Singapore Airlines hostesses; the commentary went on to reveal that, amazingly, the flawless beauties used in SAL ads to woo potential travellers are all, in fact, genuine cabin crew. Julian Pettifer's excellent social history of flying has been full of diverting clips and the sort of information which delights everyone reared on Arthur Mee. His final programme, on the future of air travel, was no exception: did you know, for instance, that one Boeing a day rolls off the production line in Seattle; that doctors are increasingly worried by what they term 'airline-transmitted diseases'; and that there are suburbs in Alaska which are built around airstrips, and where the equivalent of having a street arab letting your tyres down is discovering a bear in your cockpit? For those who like to believe that history proceeds if not in full circles, then at least in loopy ellipses, there was wry pleasure to be had in the prediction of a Boeing expert that, given the rise in the price of oil, the future now lies with the coal-fired plane. And lovers of historical irony would have been even more taken with the new sort of package tour which has recently sprung up in the wake of Alex Haley's *Roots*. According to Pettifer, affluent black pilgrims from cities like Detroit are now regularly flown to the West coast of Africa to sightsee the frequently grisly locations from which their slave ancestors had once departed. No prizes for guessing the skin pigmentation of the tour operator seen herding the slaves' descendants round on this bizarre return visit.

Charlie Muffin (Thames) was more than disappointing, especially to admirers of Brian Freemantle's pre-Muffin thrillers. Routinely directed by Jack Gold in Sixties clichés – from the class-hierarchy of shoes at the start to the boffing-on-stolen-dollar-bills at the end – it used the early Deighton formula of peed-on Cockney sparrer overcoming chinless public-school superiors. Ian Richardson (Smiley's mole) had to play a posh shit yet again, barking hysterically at those who served inferior caviare. Far more chilling a villain (because far more human, more likeable despite one's natural resistance) is Trevor Peacock's Quilp in William Trevor's adaptation of *The Old Curiosity Shop:* a purveyor of sudden, hurtling threats and a riotous dismantler of Mrs Quilp's tea-party. I'm worried about that Little Nell, though. Just a slip of a thing. I only hope she doesn't spoil everyone's Christmas by being taken poorly.

Revelries

ANNE KARPF previews Christmas RADIO

Almost nothing is left uncontaminated by Yule-fever on the radio in the coming fortnight. Save for the odd Christmas oratorio and King's College carols (Christmas Day, 3 pm), Radio 3 appears to remain imperiously indifferent to all things seasonal. But then you switch on a seemingly unfestive piece of music, only to discover that its composer was born on Christmas Day.

It is *de rigeur* for Christmas to happen (usually on Boxing Day) in every radio serial, in an awful confounding of life and art: so we have Christmas dinner chez the Archers, another culinary binge in *Waggoner's Walk*, and so on, until the simulated satiety of the wireless Christmas far surpasses real-life excesses. The worst features of radio are exacerbated at Christmas: all of radio peddles the same event, and the same version of the same event, and the audience is seen as homogeneous – robotic live-alikes, enjoying Identikit revelries. At Christmas, *pace* the statistics, we all become 1930s families, with Grans, Mums, and Dads, and boys who like train-sets and girls who love dolls. People who deviate are either the Sick – those in hospital whose condition is aggravated by having a radio request programme recorded in their ward – or the Poor for whom, in good-will speeches, we are enjoined to spare a thought.

Certain genres are considered suitable for Christmas listening: anything Victorian; anything from the Archives; anything musical, especially operetta. And then there is the anthology. It's a favourite method of recycling the year's programmes cheaply, but this year, the BBC has got wise: the anthologies are cowering under pseudonyms like 'a parcel', 'a selection of extracts' and, best of all, 'Bank Holiday bric-à-brac'.

A privileged place must be accorded the *Moonshine* series: anthologies yes, but wry ones, compiled by Pete Atkin and Russell Davies, and produced by Jonathan James-Moore. They are thematic (Radio 4, 11.15 pm: *Moonshine on Trains*, December 23; *Trees*, December 27; *Dogs*, December 30). The *Trees* edition, bless them, has no Christmas tree in it: merely a collection of poems and prose (Larkin to Calvino) on trees, and they have wittily exhumed some very bad music. Though Judi Dench's presentation is a shade over-actressy, the material is skilfully sent up.

The most promising drama of the fortnight disappoints. *The Last Ride of Walter Enderby, Motorist and Amorist* (Radio 3, December 30, 7.15 pm), a new play by the distinguished radio dramatist Don Haworth, produced by Richard Wortley, is a satire on bureaucracy, sociology, liberalism – the obvious targets. (There seems to be a time-lag in satire: writers are still laying into sociologists, radical social-workers, etc., and don't seem to have noticed that due to Thatcherism, they've all been cut.) Walter (Nigel Stock), living a life of self-delusion, comes up against a German shrink and some strip-cartoon sociologists, who veto the word 'objective' yet try to make him face reality. Walter is a richly bombastic eccentric living with latter-day Glums, and these passages work well and are funny, but the play is slow and uneven, its centre occupied by limp, familiar parody of ongoing, in-depth jargon.

Jane Morgan has produced two plays of the kind which pass almost unnoticed critically, but should make one praise God and pay up the licence-fee. *Pawn Takes Pawn*, by Jacek Laskowski (December 27, Radio 3, 7.45 pm), is a fine study of two contrasting chess-players on the eve of a world championship – Korchnoi and Karpov you would swear, except that the play was written before that. Levin is the ascetic champion, obsessed with perfecting his game, able to interact with chessmen but not humans; Estep is his flamboyant, petulant, but fully living competitor – yet neither are pawns of a writer's over-schematised world-view.

The play starts with whispered, rasping desperation, threatening to become the kind of vulgar-Chekhov where all the characters enter saying 'Ilya Ilyavovitch, tonight I will kill myself'. But it develops beautifully, to a climax which changes all that has passed before. It's a play about dedication, power and vulnerability, well-paced, well-directed, and with marvellous performances from Alan Dobie (Levin), William Nighy (Estep), and John Castle.

Down to Earth, by Aileen La Tourette (January 3, Radio 4, 3.15 pm) begins in the convent humour genre à la *Once a Catholic* (all the girls called Mary, etc), but turns into a sharp, intimate play about women and marriage, with Maureen O'Brien, winner of a recent best actress award.

Otherwise, *The ITMA File* (Christmas Eve, Radio 4, 10.15 pm) is nostalgia masquerading as social history, but pleasurable with it. Producer Alan Haydock has plundered the written (and sound) archives for material about *ITMA* (its goal: 100 laughs per show). What emerges from the memos he has found is its wartime propaganda role, and the constraints on jokes ('Censorship in wartime for Variety programmes falls under two headings – (a) Dirt (b) Defence'). Doubtless listeners will be re-splitting their sides at 'Can I do you now, sir?', though I find it achingly unfunny.

In the crush of aural tinsel, how welcome is *All Across the USA* (January 2, Radio 3, 2.55 pm), a six-part cruise across the southern states of America in search of living traditional music. The first is an engaging report on the bluegrass music of the Appalachians. As someone in whom the sound of the banjo induces acute urticaria, along with heavy sweating and persistent shaking, I don't take much to its hillbilly strumming, yet it is well-located in its social context, with miners harrassed by crafty mine-owners explaining the music's role, though Anthony Wall's lustreless commentary plods a little.

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Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Thraldom

The Wild Duck by HENRIK IBSEN *Olivier*
When We Are Married by J. B. PRIESTLEY *Lyttleton*

The Wild Duck is Ibsen's assault on Ibsenism, the play in which the champion of truth defends lies, the idealist recommends common sense, the symbolist attacks those who presumptuously find symbolism in other people's lives, the detergent comes pretty close to siding with the moral swamp, and Ibsenism itself leads more or less directly to the death of a child. It naturally proved distressing to those of his acolytes who, as Shaw maliciously suggested in *The Philanderer*, were busy organising themselves into Ibsen clubs in which it was *de rigeur* for men to be unmanly and women unwomanly, or exploiting the master's name to further their own libertine ends, or otherwise oversimplifying his white-hot philosophy; but it was a necessary dampener and corrective, at any rate in a decade as desperate for new faiths as the 1880s. Nowadays we have our own intellectual ferments, and the play has inevitably and irrevocably lost some of its original impact. It has become the tale less of a moral evangelist making well-meant but excessive demands on the man on the Clapham omnibus than of an insensitive, self-indulgent, blundering booby.

That is very much the way Gregers Werle, the destructive idealist, emerges from Christopher Morahan's production. As Michael Bryant plays him, he's an overblown child who believes he has escaped an evil father's clutches, yet constantly betrays his true thraldom. Only an emotional slave would smirk with self-delight not to find his hands shaking after a bitter brush with the old man; only a slave stop at nothing, up to and beyond the peace of mind of a friend he genuinely likes, in his efforts to exact retribution; only a slave display the tiny signs of vindictive triumph Mr Bryant flashes us towards the play's end. He looks and sounds like an over-age school swot or perhaps an importunate curate, with his pale, crabbed face, his thin-rimmed specs, his ludicrous pitcher-ears, quaint beard, dumpy figure and bookish voice. It is difficult to believe that any man, even one as ingenuous as Stephen Moore's rumpled Hjalmer, could accept him as a latter-day version of the fiery-charioted Elijah.

It's a prejudiced interpretation, but a bravura performance, which unbalances yet fails to overturn a play that, it's only fair to confess, has always struck me as a bit schematic and soulless. This time, I found myself touched and even moved, perhaps because the emphasis was so little on ideas and worthy abstractions, so much on the follies and inadequacies of the human animals behind them. Moreover, we've a simple, dignified and exceedingly sympathetic mother in Yvonne Bryceland, an earnest, diffident and vulnerable daughter in Eva Griffith, and, in Ralph Richardson, harrumphing, mumbling and (once) shakily sobbing from beneath an absurd ginger toupée, a much more than usually fascinating grandfather. Even old Werle has his striking moments, notably when Mark Dignam, whose performance as a whole steers a sensible course between rigour and pathos, allows himself to dart an abject, hungry look at the child he suspects is his own but will never see again, because he's moving away and losing his sight. Altogether, it's a production whose parts compensate for any oddities or incongruities in their sum.

Of course, there's always the question of why the National Theatre is recycling familiar 'classics' rather than promoting new drama or exhuming neglected work. Better *Little Eyolf* or *When We Dead Awaken* than yet another *Wild Duck*. Admittedly, a theatre that has recently rooted out *A Fair Quarrel*, *The Fruits of Enlightenment* and *The Undiscovered Country* can hardly be dismissed as lacking all enterprise; yet it is, to say the least, disconcerting to spend consecutive nights in Peter Hall's powerhouse watching A-level Ibsen and pier-end Priestley. Better *Time and the Conways* or *Johnson Over Jordan* than an umpteenth *When We Are Married*, deliciously acted though it is. Better still something by a 20th-century Briton not yet touched by the National's necromantic arts; Barrie, Houghton, Eliot, Rattigan, Whiting, Orton.

Priestley set most of his attacks on smugness and hypocrisy in the Edwardian age, for obvious reasons, but gave them a variety of theatrical coatings. *An Inspector Calls* is a thriller, *Eden End* a Chekhovian memoir, and *Married* a broad Yorkshire comedy populated by calculated caricatures, updated archetypes on the lam from some old morality play. Pride, avarice, anger and lechery, represented by Joan Sanderson, Robin Bailey and Leslie Sands, are there to be punished; their victims, comprising Pat Heywood, Barbara Ferris and a gorgeously owlish Harold Innocent, there to be rewarded. More specifically, those who dominated their spouses emerge chastened from the revelations, first that they aren't really married, then that they are, and those who were oppressed or hen-pecked end up with self-respect and confidence. Predictability is part of the pattern: which may, of course, be small comfort to those who felt that their rumps would ossify if Priestley prolonged his schoolmasterly joke one more minute. Speaking for myself, I've always found the play much redeemed by his most ebullient creation, an outrageously drunken press-photographer named Ormonroyd: the more so this time, since Peter Jeffrey plays him with a wit and precision that suggest he's been doing original research off Fleet Street.

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Films

John Coleman

Hollow Men

Apocalypse Now (X) *ABC, Shaftesbury Avenue*
Breaking Away (A) *Gate Two; Odeon, Kensington, from 27 December*
The Black Hole (A) *Odeon, Leicester Square*
Meteor (A) *Warner West End; Scene; Classics, Haymarket and Oxford Street; ABCs Bayswater, Fulham and Edgware Roads; general release*
Goin' South (A) *Plaza*
Stories from a Flying Trunk (U) *Studio, Oxford Street; selected cinemas*

In the beginning was Joseph Conrad's short novel, *Heart of Darkness*, famous for supplying an epigraph ('Mistah Kurtz – he dead') to T. S. Eliot's poem 'The Hollow Men'. Some 10 years ago, the gun-happy surfing buff, film-writer and film-maker John Milius turned the Conrad into a script set during the Vietnam war. More recently, there was Michael Herr's book, *Despatches*, on the same conflict. Now, at last, comes Francis Ford Coppola's hectic, heralded movie, *Apocalypse Now*, which draws on these various sources, dead and alive, with something approaching cinematic genius and with something else, too, best described as crassness.

Surely the last reels, which have loopy Dennis Hopper intoning 'I should have been a pair of ragged claws' and bald, bloated Brando – as renegade Colonel Kurtz amid skulls and mad Montagnards – indulging in a kind of Eliot seminar (copies of Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and Fraser's *The Golden Bough*, referred to in those notes to *The Waste Land*, lie handy in his jungle fastness), achieve a new high in pretentiousness. And the more's the pity, because it is the stations of the quest itself – whereby a zonked-out young veteran, Captain Willard (Martin Sheen), is sent to 'terminate' Kurtz 'with extreme prejudice' – which provide the edgy, pyrotechnical fascination, the awful brilliance, of Coppola's movie; and not the last maunderings of his quarry.

The true revelations of *Apocalypse Now* are essentially its tremendous audio-visual set-pieces. As Willard travels up-river for the CIA in his naval patrol boat, the sort of large-scale surrealism adumbrated in *Catch 22*, both novel and film, takes him and us over. I defy the most pacific viewer not to surrender for the moment to a helicopter strafing of a Vietcong beachhead, struttingly led by a rasp-throated Lt. Colonel Kilgore (Robert Duvall superb as a sawn-off John Wayne). A dozen choppers weave and duck through a menacing aerial dance to the hugely amplified strains of 'The Ride of the Valkyries'; rockets streak, flares smoke yellow and pink, bodies stagger and slump; Kilgore talks chirpily of surfing, the point of the exercise – 'Charlie don't surf'. War is madness and its contemporary lunacy further stressed when a gyration of sexy Bunnies laid on to entertain the sex-starved troops in a clearing has hastily to be air-lifted out. Later, Willard has coldly to administer the *coup de grâce* when an innocent sampan is attacked in error, bear incredulous witness as a river bridge decked out with fairy lights is the scene of a Walpurgisnacht battle. By now, Willard may be intended as no better than his raving victim; but, though nightmare-haunted, he was a hard killer from the first. Coppola furnishes a string of incidents of extraordinary impact, high-operatic, caustic, roustabout, horrifying – a Hell, you might say, of a spectacle. What worries me is that the main weight of his effort goes to support a simple and damnable proposition: war is downright exhilarating.

Peter Yates's *Breaking Away* is a gentle, genial affair about four teenage lads in Bloomington, Indiana, who haunt a water-filled quarry one summer and wonder what happens next with their lives. Their unengaging leader, Mike (Dennis Quaid), misses his fame as school football ace; diminutive Moocher (Jackie Earle Haley) defensively courts young Nancy; lanky Cyril (Daniel Stern) makes wisecracks; and Dave (Dennis Christopher), determined to become a bicycle racing champ, shaves his legs and speaks Italian at the drop of a handlebar. He, his parents and a chic campus girl who falls for his Italian line become the focus. Paul Dooley is great as Dad, a used-car salesman wincing at every 'Ciao, papa', and Barbara Barrie the best thing around as sweet-faced, indulgent Mom. A feud with some local university smarties comes to a head in a nicely paced, massed bike race, which aims to do for two wheels what *Bullitt* did for four. Mostly, Steve Tesich's script is so undemanding as to be damn near quiescent.

Walt Disney Productions' most expensive project ever, Gary Nelson's *The Black Hole*, was created in such secrecy (closed sets, final pages missing from the stars' scripts) and ushered in before us members of the press with such awe that my fingers keep kneeling as I type this. In the event, it has an impressive amount of hardware – unlike drear old *Star Trek* – and some seamless camera trickery, so that a sense of great distances, huge volumes is genuinely ferried over. 'Quite a layout,' as Ernest Borgnine somewhere beams. He, Anthony Perkins keeping a wondrous straight face, Yvette Mimieux as the token woman, a trio of others and a chummy little robot called Vincent are about to head their US space-probe home, empty-handed, when they stumble on the derelict USS Cygnus, a massive craft missing for 20 years, now poised near a black hole. Suddenly, magnificently, the Cygnus lights up, like a sprawling city under construction. Our goodies are tugged aboard to meet the nefarious, slant-smiled Maximilian Schell, who claims to have stayed on against orders when all the crew had fled, meanwhile populating his lonely domain with robots, big, unloveable ones. All is not what it seems; cloaked figures with blank mirror-faces also do his bidding. Vincent finds a bedraggled, look-alike buddy with a cowboy accent. It's a good thing money talks in the special effects, because the dialogue is ghastly. The end is ambitious, religiose, and borrows a

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couple of notions – oddly enough – from *Fantasia*. Get the kids to take you.

Ronald Neame's *Meteor* may be descending all over town, but is not so much a disaster-movie as a disaster. Sean Connery scowls, as well he might, as a NASA scientist brought in by Karl Malden to link up with the Russians (Brian Keith, Natalie Wood) over a common menace: an earth-bound meteor five miles wide. Some hefty splinters thud down, anyway, redly wrecking a ski resort, a Pisan drive-in theatre and releasing a flood of sewage down the New York subway. Trevor Howard deals bemusedly with the British end. Henry Fonda comes up for his third term as President. Jack Nicholson's *Goin' South* is, inevitably, much more fun, though perhaps less fun than it thinks it is. 'Is that the horse that fainted?' is one of its good, quirky lines (four hands worked on the script). Nicholson plays Moon, a scruffy, nasal bandit, saved from the gallows at the last second by an ordinance – by-product of the Civil War – allowing an unwed woman of property to claim a condemned man as husband. His prickly bride (the very attractive, 'natural' Mary Steenburgen) simply needs him to work a mine she's sure holds gold. It does and skittering adventures follow, including her amusing defloration, encounters with Moon's old gang and girl, bullets rarely hitting targets, and silent-movie set-ups.

A child danced down the aisle the day I saw Christine Edzard's *Stories from a Flying Trunk*, based on three Hans Andersen tales, the last of which sets vegetables and Royal Ballet dancers marvellously dressed as vegetables finely cavorting to Rossini. Stop-frame animation also devotedly brings crockery, matches, a wonderfully whirling plastic bag to life in the first. More matter with the same art, please.

Weekend Competition

No 2597 **Set by Farouche Features**

Something for you to ponder over the poultry and pud. We can all think of people who are, shall we say, just the teeniest bit tiresome (did someone say Norman Mailer? Norman Scott? Fatboy?). Now's your opportunity for revenge. In not more than 100 words, write the New Year's resolutions you would *like* to hear from one of your irritants. Three entries max., by 11 January. Clear?

No 2594 **Set by Nancy Whinny**

We wanted updated versions of Arthur Hugh Clough's *The Latest Decalogue* . . .

Report **By Dan Drough**

. . .but what we got was something else. I should have thought that Nancy's instructions would have been comprehensible to even the dimmest of compers, yet from all corners of Britain came typewritten evidence to the contrary. Some of you thought that the maximum number of entries ('two goes each', Nancy said) meant two commandments rather than two decalogues. Others seemed to think that entries in prose would be acceptable. The Admirable Bill Greenwell confessed to being in 'mild desperation'. A pity, as there were some pleasant quips in the postbag. 'Thou shalt not kill; but conspiracy to frighten may sometimes go unpunished' (Chaim Gelleon). 'You should not kill, though some concession/Must be allowed the medical profession' (H. G. Taylor). 'Thou shalt not kill Weekend Competitions. Thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbour unless asked to do so by a police officer' (Tim Hopkins). Oh all right, a Newton to each of these three as a seasonal gesture, and copies of the *ODQ* to the winners (thank you, thank you, OUP; may your serifs never wilt). And a Merry Christmas all round.

Praise no god but me, however tempted.
(Ethnic minorities are, of course, exempted.)
Worship of graven images is out.
Refer to the Arts Council, if in doubt.
In vain thou shalt not take my name.
Choose an expletive whose impact's the same.
To keep it holy, observe the sabbath day.
Time-and-a-half, less tax, is meagre pay.
Honour thy mother and father, still.
They might have second thoughts about their will.
Thou shalt not kill. Though, on dark nights,
We all take chances at the traffic lights.
Adultery is not to be committed.
Several alternatives are now permitted.
Thou shall not steal, except from super-marts.
They're huge. They're rich. They couldn't give two farts.
Against thy colleague – no false witness.
Just hint, in boss's ear, about his fitness.
Covet not anything of Jones.
Just see that you can own everything he owns.
This Decalogue is only writ on plastic.
In whole or part, regard it as elastic.

W. S. BROWNLIE

Just one God, right? For me and you
it's God next door, the mate of Stew.
Football we know, we've been to Craven
Cottage – but what's an 'image' and what's 'graven'?
We swear all night, in court and out – there'd
be no fucking life without.
Church? What a hole, like in the head!
All *we* want from a church is lead.
Honouring parents? Likely lads
think nothing's squarer than their Dads.
Don't kill on jobs – unless it's plain
they'd recognise your lot again.
You're joking, surely? Thought you knew,
kids can commit adultery too.
Write it on walls: THOU SHALT NOT SQUEAL (for
us there's no such word as 'steal')
but if free pardons come your way,
then perjure, shop your mates, OK?

Don't know what 'covet' is. A man
must grab as much loot as he can.

GAVIN EWART

The sovereignty of Allah needs no proof – he's
Even known to Sunnis and to Sufis.
Have no false idols, says the Ayatollah;
Thou canst not worship Allah and the dollar.
Commit no blasphemy against Islam,
Unless required by some senile Imam.
Each day is holy, so in celebration
Be merry, and refrain from all potation.
Respect thy mother; as she's female guard her.
Keep her repressed and veiled behind a chador.
Thou shalt not kill – but should the need arise
Jihads aren't difficult to organise.
For women chastity's the summum bonum;
If they commit adultery then stone 'em.
To counter thieving, sentences impose
Which render fingerprinting otiose.
Thou shalt not lie or make false accusations,
Except against the decadent western nations.
And covet not wealth – nationalise it;
Some surah in the Q'ran will authorise it.

A. HOON

Tony Miles

Chess

No 160 **A favourite game**

One of the questions one is continually asked by reporters is 'What is your best or favourite game?' 'Best' is always difficult to define, but I certainly do have a favourite and, as it happens, I have never annotated it before.

No small part of my favouritism is due to the fact that it clinched the World Junior Championship for me. It was played in the penultimate round at Manila in 1974.

White: A. Kochiev **Black: A. J. Miles**

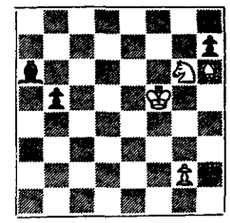
1.P-K4, P-QB4; 2.N-KB3, P-Q3; 3.P-Q4, PxP; 4.NxP, N-KB3; 5.N-QB3, P-KN3; 6.B-K3, B-N2, 7.P-B3, 0-0; 8.Q-Q2, N-B3; 9.P-KN4!? A sharp move which experienced a brief spell of popularity around the time of this game. I had met it once before about eighteen months earlier in a county match against John Littlewood. At that time I continued 9 . . . N-Q2!! 10.P-KR4, QN-K4; 11.B-K2, NxN? (. . . N-R4 is a better try); 12.BxN, B-K3; 13.P-B4! and White won heavily.

After that game I spent a while looking at 9.P-KN4 and came up with an interesting idea. Over the board I sank into thought. After twenty minutes I summoned up the courage to test my idea: **9 . . . P-K3!** Black treats White's P-KN4 as a premature wing attack. **10.N(Q4)-N5?!** after twenty-five minutes' thought, not a move I had considered. White tries for a direct refutation based on the weakness of Black's Q3. **10 . . . P-Q4.** 10 . . . N-K1 is as horrible as it looks. **11.B-R5** (White must be consistent), **P-QR3!** A fine exchange. **12.BxR, KxB,** not . . . QxB. 13.N-B7 and the N surfaces on Q5. **13.PxP(?), PxP; 14.N-R3.** Now if 14.N-Q4, NxN; 15.QxN, Q-K2ch! (. . . N-K5, Q-N4ch) and 16 . . . N-K5 or . . . NxP according to White's reply. **14 . . . P-QN4; 15.N-Q1** forced. Both Ns must retreat and QN2 has to be defended. **15 . . . P-N5; 16.N-N1, BxP! 17.B-N3, Q-K2ch! 18.Q-K3** (best). **N-K5!!** The climax of Black's attack. The White king is nailed firmly in the centre (19.0-0? B-Q5). **19.PxN!** At last White begins to crack. If 19.PxB, B-Q5! 20.Q-K2 (Q-R6ch, K-N1; 21.K-B1, R-K1! or 21.N-K3, N-N4! and the KP is decisive) R-K1 and White has no move. **19 . . . BxN; 20.N-Q2, BxP; 21.R-B1, P-Q5; 22.Q-KR3, P-Q6; 23.0-0, K-N1, 24.P-K5, R-Q1!** supporting the QP and controlling Q4. (If 25.BxN, Q-B4ch.) **25.P-K6.** The pawn is doomed so White jettisons it as best he can. **25 . . . PxP; 26.QR-K1, N-Q5; 27.K-R1, N-B4 28.R-K4, Q-N4! 29.N-B3, Q-R3; 30.R-R4!** *A spirited attempt at* counterplay. In fact Black can defend successfully with 32 . . . R-KB1! 33.N-N5, RxRch; 34.BxR, B-B1! but it is far simpler to ignore the rook. **30 . . . Q-K6! 31.RxNP, P-Q7; 32.NxP, QxQ; 33.BxQ, RxN.** All that remains is to reach the time control safely. **34.R-K1, B-B1; 35.R-N8, K-B2; 36.R-N7ch, B-K2; 37.B-B1, B-R5; 38.R-N6, B-Q3; 39.R-K2, R-Q8; 40.K-N2, B-N4; 41.R-KB2.** At this point the game was adjourned and a capacity crowd of about a thousand spontaneously stood and applauded.

The remainder was rather an anti-climax, being played in a small room at the hotel. **41 . . . B-B4; 42.R-N7ch, K-B3; 43.BxB, PxB** (not BxR, B-K2); **44.R-K2, R-N8ch; 45.K-R3, P-N4! 46.R-N2, R-Q8!** Resigns.

Problem 160

White to play. A familiar theme. He is a piece up but his last pawn is in danger. Can he win? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 9 January.



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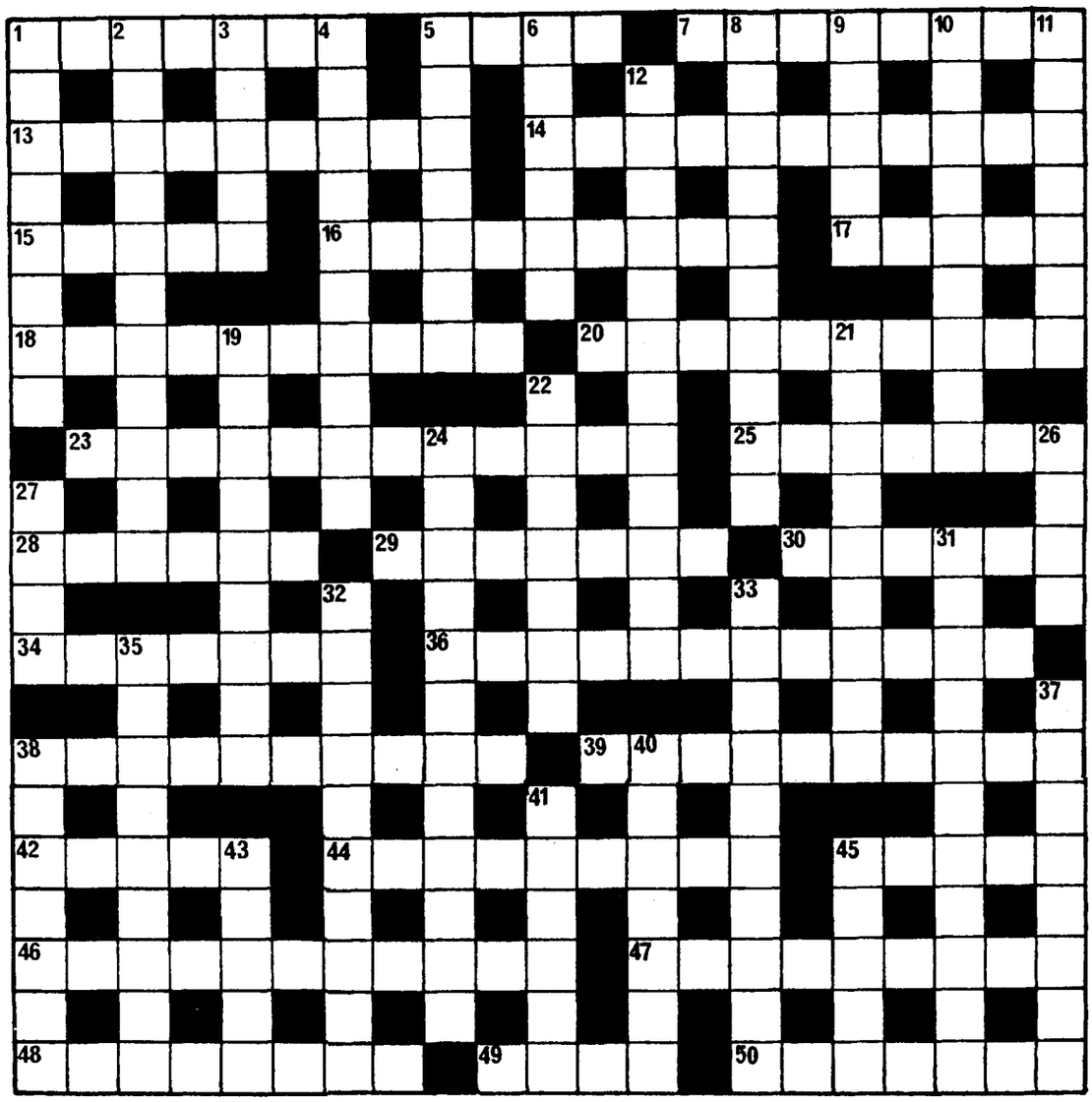
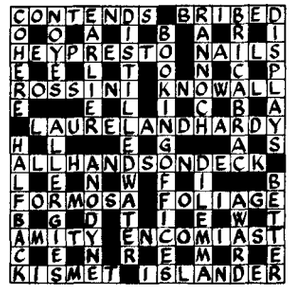


CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD 1327

BIGGER PRIZES

Book tokens of £5 for the first five correct solutions opened. Entries to Christmas Crossword 1327, New Statesman, Great Turnstile London WC1V 7HJ by first post 8 January 1980.

Solution to No 1325



Prizewinners to No 1325

Karen Zentler (London SW3)
M. Herbison (Larkhall)
Mrs K Evans (Christchurch)

ACROSS

1. Abandoned when a number were uncomfortable (7).
5. Kill the sound of something belonging to Father Christmas (4).
7. 'View him with ——, yet with jealous eyes' (Pope) (8).
13. Made a mistake: if in the present, it would be a setback for the schoolchildren (7, 2).
14. Give teachers the sack and they will constantly be near the fire (11).
15. Marble passage (5).
16. Christmas starts with finale in rearranged score getting louder (9).
17. Name which puts a stamp on progress (5).
18. A medal for Christmas? (10).
20. Job not on the rocks, for it is busy before Christmas (4, 6).
23. Unethereal poet makes unusual forfeit in play (5, 2, 5).
25. Type articles for William and Co. (7).
28. As a learner I approach a script without a B (6).
29. Being among the intelligent I learn to be of the clan (7).
30. The sound of bells on the street is needed for the present (6).
34. King holds the stately home (7).
36. The harvests mice spoil when Santa comes (9, 3).
38. The fallen possess what is dilapidated (10).
39. One who carries the dead around for fear there is a dance (10).
42. Standards set when no writing is without one of the three (5).
44. Mary's festival of light attended by university people (9).
45. Something baked when it is cold in the city (5).
46. Eton masters in extremely oriental guise (11).
47. Make Grieg use nothing outrageous (9).
48. Writers in the south employ a means of keeping the reader guessing (8).
49. God has two existences (4).
50. Supervise a piece of writing in Old English (7).

DOWN

1. Rejects a Christmas present in town (8).
2. What We Three Kings have as a reward for winning the games? (6, 5).
3. In the Christmas spirit very quietly entering what Jesus slept in (5).
4. Means of presenting a book (10).
5. Eat more freely, being a top person (7).
6. Assume influence (6).
8. Advent without means of defence is satisfying (10).
9. Cut down since being in debt? (5).
10. When it is unusually dark I free the queen (9).
11. Agile at showing a number is a number (7).
12. No half prices provided for country lovers (12).
19. Make a festive sound sound familiar (4, 1, 4).
21. Sample of a setter being wrong (9).
22. They help get a Christmas dinner for second-rate consumers (7).
24. Domestic opening when foreign woman has name introduced (6, 6).
26. Wise Man makes a second a long time (4).
27. Home for a drink before the beginning of Christmas (4).
31. Needed before a party but possibly not in a visit (11).
32. One of these beggars would have to repair it without tin (10).
33. He puts on a show and makes a false promise about the fresh air (10).
35. Spoil one among several jobs in the garden (9).
37. Such neat disguise for those of low morals (8).
38. They beat things for the Christmas pudding (7).
40. Obstructs the supply of Christmas goodies (7).
41. Additional note about what hasn't turned up being needed for the Christmas dinner (6).
43. He goes all round the North to bring occasions back (5).
45. Marsh that is still needed for the railways (5).

SETSQUARE

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Answers to the Colonel's Christmas Quiz

Out of the mouths

1) Ronald Reagan
2) Anthony Burgess
3) Britt Ekland
4) Shirley Bassey
5) Edward Kennedy
6) Lady Lucan
7) Prince Charles
8) Tito Gobbi
9) J. B. Priestley
10) Sir Melford Stevenson

Golden oldies

1) Craig Douglas *Only Sixteen*
2) The Teddy Bears *To Know Him Is To Love Him*
3) Lonnie Donegan *Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavour...?*
4) Tommy Steele visited the USSR
5) Lord Rockingham's XI had *A Moose Loose Aboot the Hoose*
6) Cliff Richard *Livin' Doll*
7) Elvis Presley *A Fool Such As I* or Neil Sedaka *Oh Carol! I am but a fool*
8) The Everly Brothers *'Til I Kissed You*
9) Emile Ford *What Do You Want to Make Those Eyes at Me For?*
10) Buddy Holly *It Doesn't Matter Any More*

Gamesmanship

1) Baseball – the Pittsburgh Pirates
2) Margaret Du Pont
3) Newcastle United
4) Nellie Kim
5) Rhodesia (cricket and rugby)

How many

1) The *Nine* Tailors (Dorothy Sayers)
2) *Seven* Little Girls (pop song of the Fifties)
3) The *Three* Tools of Death (G. K. Chesterton)
4) *Two* Gentlemen of Verona
5) *Ten* Little – Indians (Agatha Christie)
6) *One Hundred* Years of Solitude (Marquez)

The way you look

1) Mrs Pepys in 1668
2) Addison on 'Ladies' Headdresses'
3) Herrick – 'A fine disorder in the dress'
4) Uriah Heep (*David Copperfield*)
5) Miss Pinkerton (*Vanity Fair*)
6) Pompey in *Measure for Measure* (Act II, Scene I)
7) Chaucer (trans. Nevill Coghill) in the *Knight's Tale*

Place to place

1) All are terriers
2) All are cakes
3) All these British places gave their names to the capitals of American states
4) All are places in the life of David Copperfield
5) All are in the titles of country dances
6) All have changed their names: New York was New Amsterdam; Oslo was Christiania; Istanbul was Constantinople; Bratislava Pressburg
7) All are settings of Gilbert and Sullivan operas
8) All become different places with the prefix 'New'
9) All are symphonies
10) All are districts of London and also parts of New York

Passing on

1) Lord Stow Hill (formerly Sir Frank Soskice)
2) Earl Mountbatten
3) Golda Meir
4) Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
5) Sir Colin Coote (former editor of the *Daily Telegraph*)
6) Frank Owen (former editor of the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Mail*)
7) John Wayne
8) Mary Pickford
9) Eric Partridge
10) I. A. Richards

Gentle reader

1) McGahern's *The Pornographer*
2) Gordimer's *Burgher's Daughter*
3) Moore's *The Mangan Inheritance*
4) Naipaul's *Bend in the River*
5) White's *The Twyborn Affair*
1) Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*
2) Hartley's *The Go-Between*
3) Strindberg's *The Father*
4) Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*
5) Hesse's *Steppenwolf*

Dating

1) The Magna Carta
2) Rationing
3) Disraeli purchased shares in the Suez Canal
4) The Yorkists won the first Battle of St Albans
5) The American War of Independence
6) James Bruce found the source of the Blue Nile
7) Homosexual acts between consenting adults
8) Humphrey Davy invented the miners' safety lamp
9) The first of the Protestant martyrs in this country
10) The Fabian Society
11) The Long Parliament
12) Henry VI

Symbolic

1) Cupid's
2) Christ in *Revelation*
3) Hermaphroditus took on his dual sex after uniting with the nymph Salmacis
4) Cronus castrated Uranus with a sickle which later became the symbol of Father Time
5) Castor and Pollux hatched from the eggs born to Leda and the swan
6) Seven Liberal Arts; Grammar – a whip; Logic – a snake; Rhetoric – book or sword; Geometry – compasses; Arithmetic – table; Astronomy – globe; Music – musical instrument
7) Bacchus from Jupiter's thigh
8) Gideon's Fleece (*Judges* 6. 36-40)

On the wing

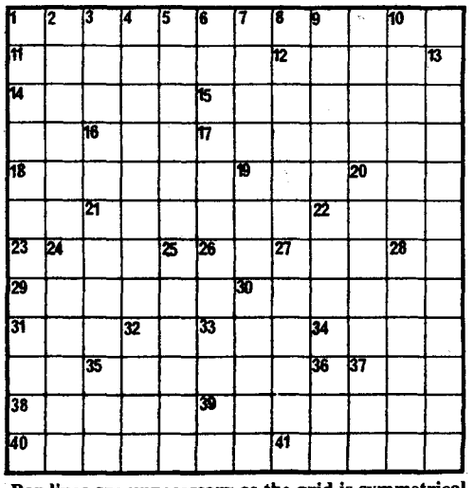
1) Cricket umpire
2) Former Warden of All Souls
3) Daughter of J. Callaghan
4) Novelist
5) Stalwart of NS Weekend Comp.
6) Journalist
7) Poems by Ted Hughes
8) Children's TV programme
9) Geranium
10) American coin
11) Character in *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry* by B. S. Johnson

Colonel's questions

1) It was in Bombay Province; is now in Maharashtra State
2) Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, and Royal Military College, Sandhurst
3) A white strip with a narrow band of blue at each end

Salamanca 25: 'From the East'

PRIZES: Book tokens for £5 for the first five correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 25, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 8 January.



Bar-lines are unnecessary as the grid is symmetrical and word lengths are given. On completion of the puzzle solvers are requested to shade in squares containing the letter E.

ACROSS

1 Nick, say, in tears (5) . . .
6 . . . giving old man magnificent fort (7)
11 Giant cactus that's used as a vegetable on the inside (7)
12 Aimed to be put out by these? (5)
14 Called round to growl (4)
15 Convent girl, say? (5)
17 Sword fixed round about – Sioux in evidence? (7)
18 Tree on famous Mount (6)
19 Topers getting drunk very quickly (6)
21 See me shortly holding shrub (5)
22 Dash the car changing lane! (4)
23 Clumsy chap with a mop (4)
26 Where to find crests? Bird's one without length (5)
29 Kings, gifts, etc. – these perhaps seen round King (6)
30 Shame to put on old cloth (6)
31 Gives another hand to leaders in difficulty (7)
35 Always? That's odd (5)
36 Malady acceptable in mature years (4)
38 Chosen by railroad etc.? (5)
39 Money undoubtedly needed for free time (7)
40 No camel through here but lace only (7)
41 They should be fat by now, sillies! (5)

DOWN

2 Where in Scotland one's to frolic about (6)
3 This commander in once more? (3)
4 Some glaciation of wild (upper region) mountain peaks (4)
5 Nick's left wood (6)
7 King having honour (we hear,—?) (4)
8 Yellowish 666 visionary carries (6)
9 Hammer up root in 2 (4)
10 Point stuck in leg, thanks to Christmas trees! (6)
13 Stable beast one can see about – Christmas scene gives an example of it (9)
14 Old King to see star moving – what grows down under? (9)
15 One kn-knocks with palms (6)
16 Dress a star (5)
19 Coat out east treated chemically (6)
20 Dell deal's out (to produce Noddy & Co.?) (5)
24 Tired? Is that so, you say, Bertie? (6)
25 Ornate structure close by (2 words, 6)
27 Like Oxo? (A whopper?) (6)
28 French hearts following different course (6)
32 Wee child holding supplement to Shakespeare (4)
33 Hole in bagpipe, long and bad (4)
34 Quit – sooth! What are missing, say? (4)
37 Miguel's piece for violin (3)

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Theatres

ALDWYCH (Royal Shakespeare Company). 836 6404. Recorded bkg info 836 5332. (No perf. 24, 25 Dec.) Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman's 'Once in a Lifetime', Pam Gems 'Piaf'. See daily press for dates and times. RSC also at The Warehouse, no perfs. this week.

NATIONAL THEATRE, 928 2252. 'Undiscovered Country', 'Amadeus', 'The Wild Duck', 'Richard III', 'Death of a Salesman', 'When We Are Married', 'Lark Rise' and 'Candleford'. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded info: 928 2256.

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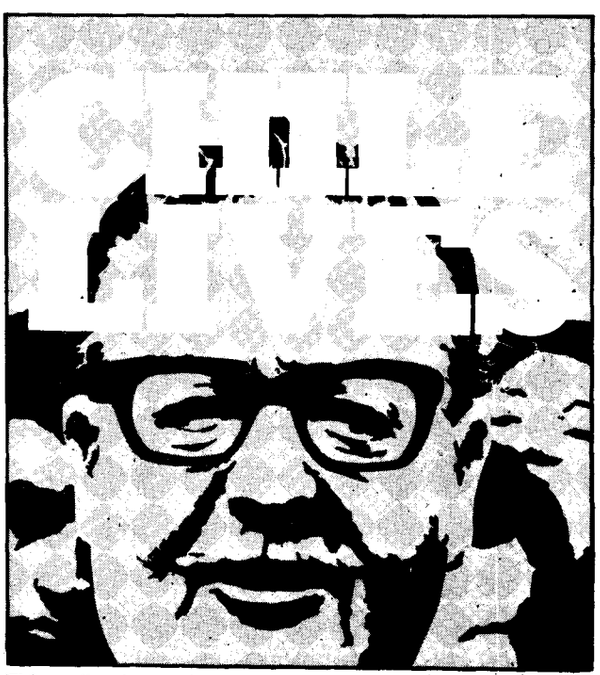

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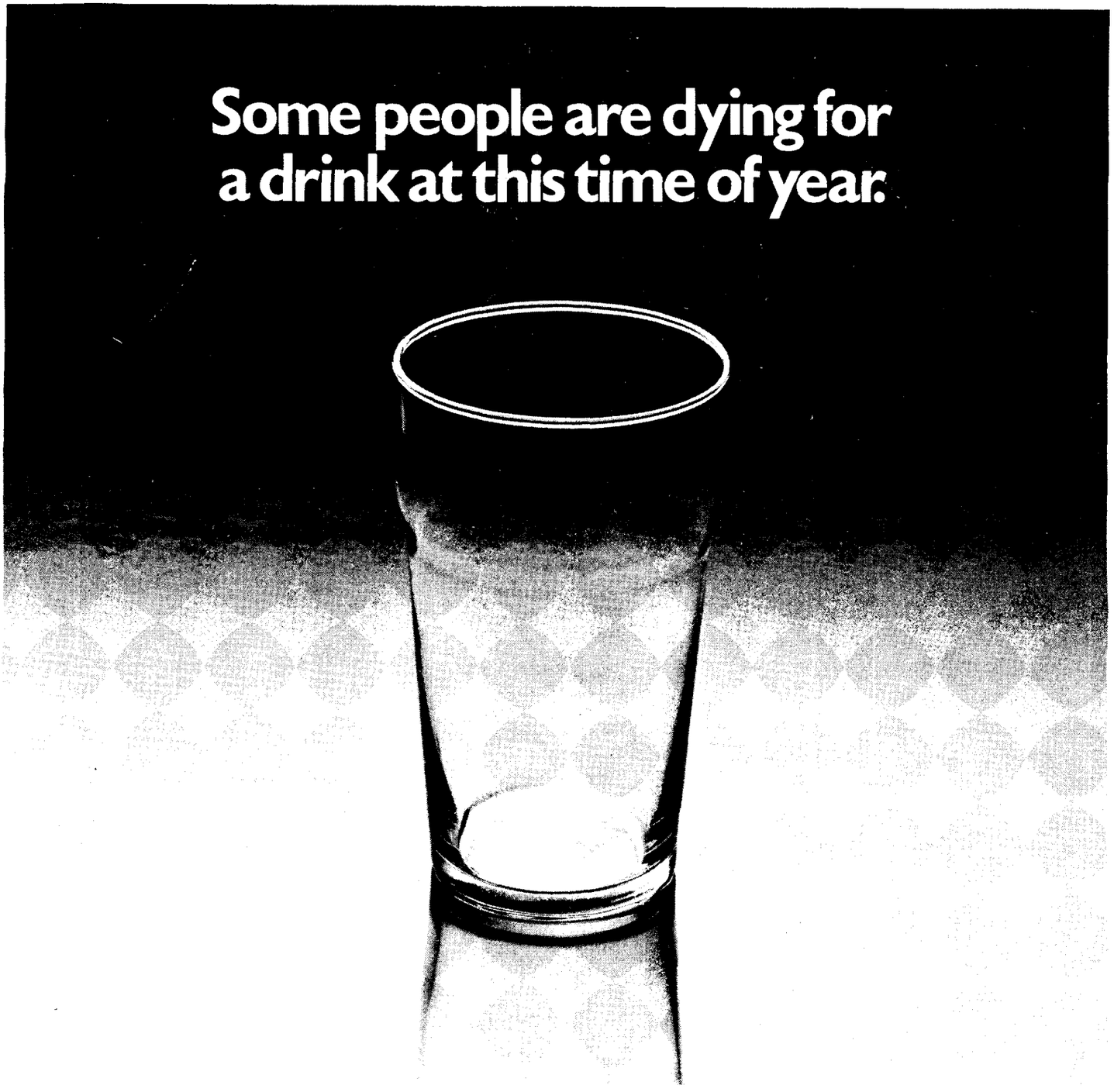

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